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THAT MEXICAN!

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COLONEL LINDBERGH

THAT MEXICAN!

As He Really Is, North and South
of the Rio Grande

By
ROBERT N. McLEAN

ILLUSTRATED



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To My Father
Who Gave the Crowning Years of His Life in the
Service of
THAT MEXICAN
And upon whose Foundations I have been
Permitted to Build

FOREWORD

“**T**HAT Mexican ” is the common denominator between the United States and Mexico. Both share in the use of his muscle, both have a chance to know the wealth of his emotional and artistic nature, and both face the problem of how to overcome the baleful effects of the land system which has dwarfed him mentally and spiritually.

My typical Juan García knows no boundary. He does most of the manual labor of the Southwest, and unless the quota bars him, he will soon be standing beside the wheels in every industrial plant, working on every section of the railroads, and bending in toil on every farm. He is accomplishing a labor penetration of the United States. And while with us, he is not of us, for he remains staunchly true to the land that gave him birth.

For a quarter of a century I have spoken his language. For thirteen years I have earned my bread through daily fellowship with him in a common task. I have walked with him and talked with him; I have worked with him and played with him; I have laughed with him and quarrelled with him. With him I have rejoiced over mutual successes, and with him I have sorrowed over mutual defeats.

And so I have written a book about him that my countrymen may know him better. It is not about Mexico, but about the Mexicans; it discusses not politics, but people.

With the customary assertiveness of the Anglo-Saxon, I have throughout used the word "American" for citizens of the United States; there is no other term available.

Grateful acknowledgement is made to J. Silva Herzog, to Cosío Villegas and to Moisés Saenz for material obtained from their University lectures; also to Miss Elena Torres and to C. R. Wellman of Mexico City for help in gathering data, and to C. A. Thomson of San Francisco and Robert Freeman of Pasadena for valuable counsel.

But above all I owe a debt of gratitude to Juan García for talking to me frankly about the things that are in his heart.

ROBT. N. McLEAN.

Los Angeles, Calif.

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I

JUAN GARCIA'S HERITAGE

UPON the squat roof of his adobe house, sat one of the ancestors of Juan García, awaiting the day of doom. The age was fast drawing to a close. Fifty-two years, as those who did business counted time, and seventy-three cycles of the sacred *tonalamtl* would be completed at midnight. Then would come the end, unless the gods in their mercy saw fit to renew their contract with men.

In the chill of the early evening, the forebear of Juan García shivered. It was doubtful, the priests had explained, that the gods would send the new fire. The people had been careless. They had neglected the services, the ceremonies. Enough human sacrifices had not been offered to feed the Sun. Doubtless the gods would vent their anger in swift death.

An hour before the sun plunged behind the rim of the western hills, the people of the city began the task of putting out their fires and their torches, for not a spark of the old flame gotten from the gods must remain when the sun had set. All these pious preparations had been made by this ancestor of Juan García as, with his children about him, he awaited whatever the gods might send.

Just at sunset the priests, dressed to represent the deities, filed out of the temples; in solemn procession, as though following a corpse to its grave, they marched

through the hushed lines of waiting people, to the mount called *Huitxachtlán*.

Came the brief tropical twilight; then dark. Everywhere there was darkness, everywhere silence. Through the gloom which their eyes could not penetrate, the people looked off toward the Mount, where the priests were watching the stars. On the roofs of the houses, in the streets, on the sides of the mountain, the people shivered and waited. Perhaps the darkness which surrounded them since the setting of the sun would be eternal. Perhaps the sun on the morrow would not rise. Perhaps in the midst of the darkness which would be to-morrow, and day after to-morrow, with no sun, the *Tzitzimimé* demons would come roaring out of the west on the wings of the wind, to devour all the men. The *Tzitzimimés* were the souls of departed women who had died in childbirth.

With unwonted tenderness the man upon the roof comforted his children. The faces of the youngest were masked with the leaves of the *agave*, lest when the Day came, they should be turned into mice. And it was about their father that they clung in their terror, for the mother was locked in the granary below. Soon she was to give birth to another child, and she could not therefore be allowed her liberty, lest she too join the host of *Tzitzimimés* that might come hurtling out of the west.

So passed the hours until the Pleiades came to the zenith. Then a captive warrior was stretched upon his back, his head, his hands and his feet securely held by five priests, while the high-priest from the Capulco quarter of Mexico, kneeling beside the prisoner, kindled upon his bare breast with the ceremonial sticks the new fire.

On a thousand housetops the watchers saw the gleam, and roaring over the valley there went up a shout of frenzied joy. The gods had given new fire! The pact had been renewed! The earth would not be destroyed for another fifty-two years!

Juan García's ancestors have left their indelible impression upon him. Because of the fact that he speaks Spanish, and has a Spanish name, it has been an easy error to place undue importance upon his Spanish antecedents. His language came to him from the power of the conqueror, for Spanish offered a common language among tribes which spoke little short of a hundred different tongues. His name he got after the Spanish conquest, it being the custom of the early priests to replace the pagan Indian names at the time of baptism. But names and a language form but a cultural gloss, while the ethnic characteristics remain. Indeed, the infusion of Spanish blood in the Mexican nation has changed its main stream about as much as a small brook changes the water of the Mississippi.

The Habit of Being Religious. The habit of religion is one of the most important legacies Juan García has received from his ancestors. They seemed to live daily in the presence of their gods. While the great pyramids in Egypt were burial places, in Mexico they were purely places of worship.

In the National Museum in Mexico City there is a codex in *maguey* parchment, which tells the story of the wanderings of the Aztec tribe. It is a beautiful piece of work, and still wonderfully preserved. Always, at each stopping place, there is the picture of the altar to *Huitzilopochtli*, the Sun-god; and always as the march is resumed, there is the hieroglyphic showing that the image of the god, borne by the priests,

was carried before. Finally there comes a place where a council is held, and *Huitzilopochtli* speaks to his people, commanding that they separate themselves, and go on alone to the place which he would show them. One is strangely reminded of the odyssey of the children of Israel in the wilderness.

The sign which the priests had promised, as indicating the will of *Huitzilopochtli*, was an eagle, seated upon a cactus, strangling a serpent in its beak. There the wanderings were to cease, and the city was to be built. So constant was the belief of the people in the revelation and direction of unseen power, that they obeyed the sign, even though it meant establishing their city of Tenochtitlán in the midst of a swamp.

The Aztec Poet. Probably the most spiritual conceptions of the time are found in the writings of *Nezahualcoyotl*. In the constant struggle for power, this young prince, hidden in a bush, was compelled to see his kingly father murdered before his eyes. The life of the young boy from that day is a romance. He was constantly hunted in the mountains, until by the turn of the wheel of fate, he became king of Tezcoco. His poems are of a wild, chaste beauty, redolent with a spiritual conception of the universe. In his desire to worship all of the gods, he caused a temple to be erected to the "unknown God." It was a temple of several stories, with its roof open to the stars, and was dedicated to the God "who is all in himself. The God by whom we live."

The Religiously-Minded Juan. When the first twelve Franciscan fathers toiled their weary way from Vera Cruz to Mexico City, they found a native people who were cannibals, who offered human sacrifices, who were sun worshippers, who were addicted in fact to

every form of paganism, but who at the same time, were keenly sensitive to the existence of things unseen, and to the idea of an overruling providence in their lives. Religion therefore in the heart of Juan García is in its native soil, and the thousands of churches all over Mexico bear eloquent testimony to that fact. By the orders of the hierarchy, the churches have been closed. There is scarcely a building, however, where earnest groups of worshippers may not be found kneeling before the shrines, and the images of the Virgin. No priests, no mass, no public service; but the religious life of Juan García flows on. It is a stream which has its fountainhead far back in the unknown ages before the beginning of history; and it is a stream which no government orders, no priestly interpretations, and no constitutional provisions can dam. This is an elemental fact which must be taken into consideration in the study of one of the most serious problems which the Mexican government faces.

The Mysticism of the Mexican. Due doubtless to his deep religious nature, Juan García is also a mystic. When the world of sense has been hard to him, he has light-heartedly passed over into the realm of the spirit. Worn by the toil of the day, and oppressed by the pangs of hunger, he has found happiness in the treasures of the soul. When circumstance has persistently closed every door to him, he has learned philosophically to accept the fact of closed doors, and to find his comfort behind them. Ever since the days of the Spanish conquest, life for Juan has been a frenzied quest of *frijoles* and *tortillas*. For years on the great *haciendas* his fathers worked for twenty-five *centavos* a day, and a handful of beans and corn at the night-time. Compelled to yield his body, he tenaciously has refused to

yield his soul. His employers, therefore, unable to understand him, have said that he lacked initiative, that he was lazy, that his heart was not in his work. Indeed his heart has not been in his work. He has given of his brawn and his muscle in the struggle for existence, but his heart he has chosen to keep for himself.

Diego Rivera has created a remarkable sketch in crayon, called "The Mexican Station." The scenery is prosaic in the extreme. There is the squat adobe building, and the tracks running each side, seem to come to a point in front of the station, crowding out the landscape. Behind, in the distance, are the tops of a few trees, but they are hidden by a wall. In the foreground upon a bench, is the figure of a lone Mexican, his face screened by a sombrero. He is asleep. The name of the station is "*Vista Alegre*—Happy View." Everything is drab, deserted, drear; the view ahead is pinched out between the tracks. The only "vista" that by any manner of means can be called "alegre" is that in the dream of the sleeping man.

Eyes of Suspicion. Perhaps it is because Juan García has made so much of the subjective world, that he is accustomed often to view the objective world with a degree of suspicion. The intrigues in the Balkans are child's play compared with the schemings which went on among the tribes on the high central plateau of Mexico before the Spaniards came. Peace could be maintained only through a triple alliance, and the peoples which had been conquered were compelled to pay tribute amounting to as much as one-third of their total yearly produce. The tribes in the alliance constantly viewed each other with suspicion; those which were subject, were all the while scheming to regain

their independence. It was a world of intrigue, and wherever there is intrigue, there is suspicion.

It may be that farther back than the days of organized life in the tribes, the ancestors of Juan García had developed the same habit. Perhaps as a lone hunter, the Indian had always adopted the circumspect custom of circling every strange object many times before disclosing himself. At all events, the coming of the Spaniards did nothing to remove the natural suspicion in the mind of the Indian. His gods were taken away from him, his sacred writings were publicly burned by the bigoted Zumárraga, his lands and his wealth were confiscated, and he himself was thrown into virtual slavery. In 1571, the Inquisition was introduced, and the suspicion of its *familiares* bred even more suspicion in the minds and hearts of the natives.

Juan García of the present time, therefore, both in Mexico and in the United States, is suspicious of every strange sight or sound, until he is absolutely convinced of its friendly nature. Given a wrong impression at the start, he draws his conclusions, and it is almost impossible to change him. Thereafter every new impression must either conform to the conclusion already reached, or be discarded. There is very little of the habit of "suspended judgment" about Juan. Either what he hears conforms to his preconceived notions, or it simply is not so.

Attitude Toward the United States. The present Mexican attitude toward the United States Government is a fair illustration. One can talk with the soldier in the barracks, with the driver on the bus, with the pick and shovel man in the street, with the boot-black, with the storekeeper, with the school teacher,

with the university professor, with the government official, and he will find that all are convinced that the United States Government is set upon establishing a hegemony over Central America which will result in the enslavement of her people. At the present time in Mexico if there should be a famine or a pestilence; if Popocatepetl should break forth in devastating eruption; if there should be a tidal wave; in fact, if any calamity should come upon the country, any Mexican could immediately prove to his own satisfaction and the satisfaction of his friends that the catastrophe was due to the economic aggression of the United States Government.

The Mexicans are courteous and enthusiastic, and they have shown both characteristics in their welcome of Lindbergh. In June of 1927, however, they could not understand the loud acclaim with which he was received in Washington. One of the Mexico City daily papers, commenting upon it, offered the explanation that in his exploit there was seen the opportunity for further economic aggression—"something in which every American is passionately interested." Juan García just now is lying awake at night, terrorized by strange sounds which make him creepy. His suspicions press the button, and his active imagination does the rest.

During the summer of 1927, the Rector of the National University invited ten professors of the law school to meet ten Americans who chanced to be in the city doing research work, for a friendly discussion of the points of difference between the two countries. The "round table" continued for two hours each afternoon, for a period of a week. Frankness, with a kindly attitude, characterized the discussion. But



FOR CENTURIES THE INDIANS HAVE BEEN EXPERT BASKET - MAKERS

when the attitude of the United States as a big brother to Latin America was being considered by the group, it was the outspoken opinion of all the Mexicans that the United States through her secret diplomacy constantly fomented troubles, in order that she may reap the material benefits of quieting them. One of the professors recalled a ditty which he said he had learned in his childhood:

*"El Señor Don Juan de Robles,
Con caridad sin igual,
Hizo este santo hospital,
Mas primero hizo los pobres."*

It will lose through translation, but it runs thus:

*"The venerable Don Juan de Robles
With a charitable heart, to be sure,
Built a hospital free to poor people—
But first, he made people poor."*

And yet, perhaps, we have missed a wonderful chance with Juan. It was in our power to make him either a good neighbor, or a bad one; and it is tragic, for both of us, that at the parting of the ways, we should have chosen the road which has made him an enemy rather than a friend.

What Can That Mexican Do? Also we have underestimated the ability of Juan García, and have let him see all too plainly that we have underestimated it. Here in America there are too many of us who have the idea that Juan is little more than an animated moron. He has muscles of steel, and we have acted as though we thought he had just about sense enough to use them with the pick and shovel. He has been a

good man to dig our ditches, to tamp our railroad ties, to pick our oranges, our cotton, our fruit, and in fact to do all of the manual labor which we consider ourselves too good to do. But from the neck up, we have not had a very good opinion of our neighbor Juan.

We are slowly coming into the possession of a good deal of data on this point, both north and south of the line. Down in Mexico, the Secretariat of Education has been making some exhaustive tests with the children of the whites, the meztizos, and the Indians. These tests are still going on, but to date they seem to indicate that when the language disability of the Indians does not count as a factor, the children of the three groups all rate about equally.

In 1926 there was opened in the city of Mexico, a school which is called "*La Escuela Indígena*." When the enterprise was launched, an effort was made to secure a representative from each of the thirty-odd tribes which are still to be found in the republic. Most of the boys were unable to speak Spanish, but in a remarkably short time, they acquired the language; and once able to understand what is going on in the class, they have ranked as well as the children brought up in the more favorable surroundings of the capital.

In the United States. But what about Juan's children when he brings them into the United States? In the Los Angeles school district, there are at the present time more than thirty-two thousand Mexican children. Where the language disability prevails, or where there has been retardation due to migration, they are placed in "opportunity rooms"; where circumstantial disability is not in evidence, they seem to keep pace in their classes with our own children.

In the Ramona School in Los Angeles a teacher was

given seventy-five Mexican children as "opportunity" pupils. So diligent were they in their application, and so successful in their studies, that in seven months they had made the same progress which the ordinary child makes in fourteen months. Perhaps in some degree, their ability is enhanced by their mental hunger. As Professor Harry M. Shafer of the Los Angeles School Board says: "So great is the hunger of these Mexican children, and so great is the zeal of their parents for them, that they are liable to outdistance our own boys and girls in their school work. So often American parents insist that they do not want their children to avail themselves of certain privileges which are offered, while the Mexican parent frankly declares that he wants his child to have advantage of every opportunity which is provided."

Juan's children are probably hungry, because he and his ancestors have been starved for so long.

Already come some of our public school teachers in the southwest telling us that in art, in music, and in handwork, the boys and girls of the García family are surpassing the children of the Joneses, the Smiths and the Browns. Some winters ago an American artist had gone to a little town close against the mountains in southern California. She had gone that she might catch with her brush the glory of golden sunsets on purple mountains; that she might paint the witchery of eucalyptus trees against the blue of the skies. One day she wandered into the little school, which was half American, and half Mexican. An art class was at work, and the visitor asked that she be allowed to take home with her the studies of the group. The next day she returned, having selected the five drawings which she thought showed the most merit. It is significant

that four drawings out of the five were the work of Mexican children.

Color and Tone. The Department of Child Welfare of the Los Angeles School Board regularly supervises the work of all children of school age who are in industry. The records of this department reveal the interesting fact that in proportion to the population, there are more children from Mexican homes working in the moving pictures, than from any other racial group.

And why should not the children of Juan García have artistic taste? Almost before they begin to talk, they have learned to hum little tunes; and when the average American child is interested only in tops and dolls, the children of "that Mexican" are learning to play musical instruments. If Juan García is given the chance, he will stand for hours, listening to the most classical music which would immediately bore the average American laborer. He has a passionate love for color, and a keen sense of tone, for music is in his soul, and beauty is in his eye. Otherwise, what mean the bright geraniums which in the southwest climb bravely up over the unpainted boards, as if to hide their nakedness from the face of the sun? No hut is so poor, no squalor so miserable, but its drabness must be relieved by potted plants, and cut flowers. Even the miserable box cars which are often the home of the railroad migrant, have their boxes of plants growing at the windows. It is as if the wild exotic beauty of his native heath had drenched his soul, and out upon the desert railroad siding, he would keep something of that beauty with him.

Courage. And the stoical courage of his Aztec ancestors has never forsaken Juan García. He dies

bravely, almost gladly, in the heat of the battle-field, or in the cool dawn before the firing squad. And in every school and in every little hut Mexican children are taught that better death than dishonor. Roberto Haberman tells that when Zapata was killed, one of his peon soldiers scratched upon the walls of the Borda gardens at Cuernavaca these words: "Rebels of the south! It is better to die upon your feet than to live upon your knees! "

Juan García has a stoical valor, a love of color and tone, and a depth of emotional life which might well be coveted. As José Vasconcelos, former Secretary of Education in Mexico has said, "When we share our material wealth, we are often impoverished; when we share our spiritual treasure, we are the more enriched by that which we give." If we could make the right sort of a friend out of Juan, he could in his frequent and prolonged visits in this country greatly enrich us through this wealth of his, and be none the poorer for it!

His Material Heritage. But the wealth of Juan García is not to be counted only in spiritual things; he has received a heritage of vast material treasure also. At the beginning of the nineteenth century Baron von Humboldt visited Mexico, and made the first real study of the material resources of the nation. He coined the phrase "the treasure house of the world" and writers and visitors have been repeating it ever since.

A vast amount of gold, silver, copper, lead and zinc has been mined. Mexico to-day leads the world in the production of silver, her annual output being close to 2,000 tons. She is second in the production of copper

¹ *Survey Graphic*, Vol. V, p. 148.

third in lead and zinc, and fifth in gold. For years she was second in the production of oil, being exceeded only by the United States. Due to the restrictions of the constitution of 1917, however, she has dropped to third place. Some of the gold and silver mines which were worked to pay tribute to the Aztecs still continue to give of their wealth. Certainly no one knows the extent of the treasure still hidden away in the mountain ranges of the Sierra Madres.

The Soil. And there is wealth not only in the sub-soil, but also in the soil. In the center of the country is an immense upland plateau, which lies for the most part at an elevation of about eight thousand feet above the level of the sea. This plateau slopes gradually away to the United States boundary line, while it is buttressed by lofty mountain ranges flanking the two oceans. From the tops of the mountains, the land slopes away in terraces to the sea. It is this topography which gives Mexico every sort of climate, and makes it possible for her to grow every kind of crop. Great areas of fertile lands are yet undeveloped. It seems to the traveller along the newly completed line of the Southern Pacific, that God paused for a moment after the creation of the rest of the world; and then having an abundance of superb material left over, used it in the formation of the west coast of Mexico. †

The Struggle for Tortillas. Some one has said that everybody in Mexico is a politician. That may be true for the towns and the cities, but not for Juan who toils with his hands upon the farm. Asked for an opinion upon the political situation he is not interested. He shrugs his shoulders. "It's all the same," he answers. Life for him under any government will still be the old frenzied struggle for beans and *tortillas*. The

great problem of the leaders of the present revolution is that of bringing an understanding of its principles to the Indian in the country. The leaven of the new day is working in the towns and the cities; but out in the country districts there are hundreds of thousands of Indians who neither read nor speak Spanish, and who do not know that Porfirio Díaz is no longer president. These are the serfs of the soil—dull, heavy, lethargic, awaiting what the gods may send. To these the gospel of the new day has not yet come.

And so Juan, with his spiritual heritage of great potentiality toils in the midst of his material heritage of unlimited possibility; Juan, poverty-stricken, in the land upon which God has smiled.

And then our minds go back to his ancestor of long ago, sitting on the roof of his squat adobe house.

Have the centuries of oppression made Juan a pessimist?

Has he, too, put out all the fires and the torches?

Is Juan, also, patiently waiting for the day of doom?

II

JUAN GARCIA'S MORTAL ILLS

JUAN GARCIA had gone to Mexico City, to sell a load of pottery. For days he had been preparing his wares. Mrs. García and even the children had helped. There had been the clay to bring from the near-by bank of the brook, and wood to fetch for the kiln. Juan himself had sat for long hours on the bench of his potter's wheel.

The journey to the capital was hard and long, and Juan paused and rested in the dim light of the coming morning, before hurrying on to the market. Sixty-eight kilometers! And the load of pottery had weighed not less than sixty kilos. But through the night and the day the road had been full of foot passengers, all carrying things to sell. There had been songs and jests as they journeyed, with an occasional stop for a mug of *pulque*. Long before the city was reached, however, the shoulder-straps had cut cruelly through the thin cotton shirt, and the tum-line had wearied even the muscles of Juan's strong neck. Now at last the journey was over.

By two o'clock he had disposed of the most of his pottery. There had been endless haggling with kitchen girls who wanted to buy good cooking pots for half their value, and careless shoppers who handled his wares, but who did not buy. Finally the last buyer was gone, and the market officials had closed up for the day.

Juan stepped out into the bright direct sunlight of

the afternoon, and started for the center of the city. He would not leave until the next morning, for he would need a night of rest; and then there were all the wonderful sights of the great city to see before night-fall.

A blind beggar woman, holding a little babe in her arms, held out her hand as he passed. Instinctively he reached for the little bag of silver and copper coins. Had he not been blessed in his business that day? And was not this one of the needy ones? He had exchanged a copper cent for a "God bless you" before he went on.

Juan knew exactly where he was going. Down near the Zócalo on the street called the "Fifth of May" was a little store which sold tickets for the lottery. Not that he could not buy tickets in almost any one of the stores which he was passing. And if he did not care to go with his soiled white shirt and white trousers into the shop, he was importuned at every step by those who sold tickets upon the street. But Juan had in mind a particular store. A man from his town had once bought a ticket there, and had drawn a prize. There was something about it; it was a lucky place to buy tickets.

Two pesos for four-twentieths! Two pesos represented about one-third of his little hoard of copper and silver. But what were two pesos? A lottery prize! Perhaps the grand prize! One must not think of two pesos!^v

The Grand Drawing. Six o'clock came, and Juan was in his seat at the National Lottery building. Always he was impressed by the grandeur of it all. The great building itself, bathed in light; the comfortable chairs in the little auditorium, where one might sit at

ease and watch the drawing; the dignity and military bearing of the officials. All this had the government provided that poor men from the country might win prizes!

The hand of the clock crossed the hour of six, and two great brass cages filled with little wooden balls began to revolve. As they came to a stop an official at each side released a lever, which sent the ball which had fallen into the slot down the channel-way to the waiting hands of little boys dressed in blue uniforms. First the number of the prize, then the number of the winning ticket were droned in a high monotone, and both repeated to avoid mistake. Then the two balls were passed to an official, who pegged them together upon wires. Juan was just a little comforted to reflect that his fortune was in the hands of boys. They were too young to be contaminated by trickery!

As each number was called Juan studied carefully the four tickets in his hand. He could not read books or papers, but this business of the numbers on lottery tickets! That much of an education at least any gentleman must have, and Juan had patiently acquired it.

An hour and a half passed, while the voices of the boys droned on. It was really very exciting. Once a prize had gone to a number very close to his; once again, he would have won, except that the last two digits were just the reverse of those on one of the tickets he held in his hand.

Then the show was over; the crowd left; the lights were turned out; Juan passed out into the street. He must hunt himself a place to spend the night. And as he walked away he tore four little pieces of paper into bits and threw them into the gutter.

The Lottery Mind. Juan's first mortal sin is his complete addiction to the lottery. In fact, Juan's is a lottery type of mind. He always wants to get rich quick, and has therefore learned to scorn the slow processes of earning and saving. His imagination is altogether too strong for his own good. Dreaming beneath his sombrero in the shade of the wall of his house, he pictures the golden paths which lie ahead. The dull days of toil and the chill nights of shivering under a serape—these he will leap at a bound. It is all so easy. There was José López—not in his own town, of course, but in a village over the hills,—who had bought a lottery ticket for a peso, and had drawn a prize of five hundred. ¡Caramba! What could not one do with five hundred pesos?

The idea of sudden wealth has gotten into the nervous system of Juan García. Work has always been the lot of beasts, and of men who know no better. No gentleman works. He finds him a gold mine, or becomes a public official, or wins a grand prize in the lottery. Juan is not thrifty because he sees the top masts of his ship just showing up on the horizon. Tomorrow it will dock, and he shall have all the money he needs. Why then guard so niggardly those few coins to-day? Bah!

The life of "that Mexican" also has been inexpressibly meagre. Always he has earned just enough to get along, and always he has been in debt, until debt has seemed the regular course of life. Sudden good fortune alone, he reasons, can overcome this handicap; if he ever succeeds in fulfilling the visions dreamed under the broad sombrero it will be by the lottery road.

This waiting for the lucky turn of the wheel is his curse. It deadens initiative, lessens the productive

power of the individual, and lifting him out of the workaday present, sets him down in an illusive future built of the stuff of which dreams are made.

An Extreme Individualist. Closely akin to this lottery spirit with which he goes gaily out alone to fight the battles of life, is the individualism of Juan García. Always he has taken orders; consequently he knows no scheme of organization which does not involve a master and his slaves. His mental habits unfit him for coöperation; associated with any one in a common task he immediately seeks to settle in his own mind the question as to whether he shall take orders or give them. He works best in tandem, not in team. When he sings, he is a soloist. For this reason there are so many generals in Mexico's armies; for this reason there have been so many plots and counterplots in her history; and for this reason also she has as yet achieved none of those great national successes which are possible only through coöperation.

The Strata of Race. The third of Mexico's mortal ills is found in the great divergence of her races. During the first part of the colonial epoch there were four groups, the Spaniards, the Creoles, the Mestizos, and the Indians. The Creoles were the children of pure Spanish blood who were born in Mexico, while the Mestizos were the offspring of the Indian women and the Spaniards. The Creole group of course rapidly disappeared, and since the revolution of 1810 the pure blood Spaniards have had little or no voice in the affairs of the country. This leaves but the Mestizos and the native Indians; but the problem is not so simple as it seems.

Most discussions of the problem of race in Mexico have to do with the group of Mestizos in the larger

cities. Nobody knows how many pure Indians there are in the country, because nobody knows where to draw the color line. It may safely be said however that the strain of white blood even in the veins of the Mestizos is so extremely weak, that the differences noted between the country people, and the city people, are due rather to education and opportunity than to blood. Because of the wide divergence in the climate of the country, ranging all the way from the tropics in *la tierra caliente* up to the temperate climate on the high central plateau, the Indian tribes in the country differ greatly among themselves.

Mexico therefore has first of all the extremely difficult problem of reaching these Indian people with any sort of government propaganda. The past history of the country has given them every reason to be suspicious, so that in many of the more remote districts they do not welcome visitors. In its efforts to carry the program of education to the Indians, the government found it necessary in some cases to have the teachers live for several years among the people, winning first their confidence, before any effort to open a school was made. Even when suspicion is broken down, there still remains the problem of language. In the newly opened rural schools, there are thousands of children who lisp Spanish words in the schoolroom, while speaking in their homes the tongue of their fathers.

Second, there is a governmental problem. Because of the lack of communication, and the rugged character of the country, the government has not been able to carry its laws to the remote areas. The tribal system of government which prevailed when the Spaniards came, is still in large part effective. The *cacique* is

ruler, and usually Mexican government officials have been wise enough to work through him.

A Land of Dissimilarities. There is indeed no common denominator for all the fifteen million people of the country. They speak not less than one hundred languages and dialects, they are different in their antecedents, different in their customs, different in the kind of work they do, different in their effective forms of government, and different even in their religion.

That religion offers the common denominator which is zealously sought for Mexico, will be the claim of many. Cosío Villegas, Mexican sociologist, makes the bold claim however that the majority of the Indians never accepted the faith of the Spaniards. In the ancient church of San Francisco, at Tlascala—the oldest church in fact on the western hemisphere—there is a tablet commemorating the baptism of the four chiefs of the Tlascaltecos. But this conversion had been gained at the point of the sword; and it was at the point of the sword that nominal allegiance was won from the Indians for the first few years thereafter. Their conquerors seemed to have an equal passion for acquiring land, and for dispensing religion, and too often the Indians made their way easier by a nominal allegiance which was not seconded by their hearts.

Frequently even this was refused, until the priests found a way of renaming the old gods, just as they had renamed their adherents. So *Huitzilopochtli*, *Coatlue* and *Tlaloc* began to be called by new names. Even in Mexican colonies in the United States one sees dances to pagan Aztec deities, rechristened for the saints. It is for this reason that Cosío Villegas says that the Indians merely glossed over their patriarchal faith with

the Christian religion. As an illustration he cites the numerous sun symbols in the altar decorations of Mexican churches. Certain it is that so much of the old tribal religion remains as to justify the statement that in the population of Mexico there is no common denominator. How to develop a national spirit among the people who differ not only from the townsfolk, but also among themselves, is one of the real problems which Mexico faces.

The Deadly Cycle. The fourth ill from which Mexico suffers is, indeed, a series of ills. It is a sequence which runs its course among any people where the wage is too low to make decent living possible. It is a cycle which begins with under-nourishment and poor housing, and then runs the gamut of sickness, lowered efficiency, high infant mortality, immorality, death.

The Peon at Home. Life in the average Mexican home of the poorer classes is meagre, uncomfortable, tragic. Three rooms to the family provide comfortable accommodations; two rooms are the average, while one room to the family is far too common. Frequently many families are compelled to use the same toilet accommodations, which are unsanitary and unsightly beyond belief. In the cities the dwellings follow each other drearily row on row, offering no place for the children to play but the narrow cobblestone streets, which are already occupied by the pushcarts and the refreshment stands of vendors.

Inside, the houses are dingy, damp, dark. Frequently there is no floor except the dirt, packed as hard as cement. Mangy cats and flea-bitten dogs mingle intimately with the children who play under their mothers' feet. There is little furniture, and in

fact there would be no room for much if it were available. In most of the poorer homes the members of the family sleep upon woven mats which are called *petates*. Bedclothing is always inadequate, so that the windows are tightly closed to keep out the cold; but even with this precaution, Juan García, weakened through under-nourishment and *pulque*-drinking, shivers uncomfortably through the night.

To the present day the Mexican cook still uses the charcoal pit and the clay pots and pans which were employed by the Indians when the Spaniards first came. Charcoal braziers also are used to heat the better homes. These are lighted and set in the street until the gas has burned off, when the glowing mass is carried into the room. The clay vessels are cheap and good and can be bought in infinite variety in the markets. What is more, they break easily, thus keeping alive one of the essential industries of the country. Corn for the inevitable *tortillas* is still ground by the cook upon the *metate*, a broad flat stone resembling somewhat a crude ironing board. Excavations show that the *metate* for the making of *tortillas* has not changed as a kitchen utensil in the Mexican home for the past ten thousand years.

In the country districts the home is much the same, except that there is more room for the children to play. The crowding inside the house, however, is just as deadly, and is made even more pernicious by the presence of the ubiquitous pigs and chickens, which occupy an adjoining room, and even at times wander into the habitations of the family. A touch of charm is added to these adobe homes by the roofs of red tile, the handicraft of the peons. There are frequently no toilets, and the calls of nature are obeyed with com-

plete frankness, wherever the individual may chance to be.

One of the gravest social problems is presented by the newsboys in the capital city. Many of these are destitute waifs, without father, without mother, without kinsfolk, without home. They sell *El Universal* and *El Excelsior* in the morning, and *El Gráfico* at night, eat from the refreshment stands upon the street, and when dark comes, huddle in some stairway and cover themselves with their unsold papers. The social problems involved can readily be imagined.

A Land of Ill Health. One is not surprised to learn, therefore that Mexico City, with a climate which probably knows no equal, has a higher death rate than that of any other city in the world of similar size. Hon. Alberto J. Pani, minister of foreign relations under Carranza, made a detailed study of housing and health conditions in the capital. In his published report he declares that Mexico City aside from Chinese cities, where no statistics are kept, is "assuredly the most unhealthy city in the whole world." He calls the homes of the poorer working classes, "sinks of physical and moral corruption."¹ When the revolutionary government came into power, half of all the children born in the capital never lived to see their seventh birthday. At that time the average length of human life in Mexico was fifteen years.

Everywhere, however, there is such a prodigality of life, and everywhere it is held so cheaply. Sometimes a father or mother, when asked the difference in the ages of the children, will answer laconically: "the ordinary time." One father who told of a large number of his children lying in the cemetery, upon receiving

¹ Ross, E. A., *The Social Revolution in Mexico*, p. 21.

the condolences from his visitor, exclaimed: "Yes, but they were very small; some were born dead, and some died soon after. Such little things! (measuring with his hands). Very soon the earth devours them when they are so small."

The Ills of the Soul. The social and moral ills which accompany overcrowding balefully follow along in Mexico City, just as they do in every other large city of the world. To the degree, however, that the housing is less adequate, the ills are greater. Privacy in the poorer homes is a thing unknown.

In cataloging the mortal ills which have been handed down as the heritage of the iniquitous land system, mention must be made of the pall of ignorance which hangs over the whole country. It was one of the essential principles of what the Mexicans call "*porfirismo*" to make clean the outside of the cup and platter. Porfirio Díaz was intent always upon making it seem that Mexico had all the refinements, all the marks of civilization which characterize the older nations of Europe. Hence the splendid public buildings in the capital, the paved streets, the parks, the statues in the public squares. It was for this reason also that particular attention was given to the establishment of public schools in Mexico City, while the rural districts were forgotten. If only foreign diplomats, who seldom left the capital, and occasional foreign visitors could be adequately impressed, the demands of *porfirismo* were satisfied. But this neglect of the rural districts, has left a legacy of illiteracy running up to sixty-three per cent. for the whole nation. In some states it is as high as ninety per cent.; in others, where are located the largest cities, the per cent. of the people who can neither read nor write drops to thirty-three. The



CORRIDOR OF THE CATHEDRAL OF SAN FRANCISCO TLASCALA
OLDEST CHURCH IN AMERICA

problem which the present administration faces is that of building a representative type of government upon a foundation of gross illiteracy.

Pulque. No one who goes to Mexico fails to note the prevalence of drunkenness as one of the country's major ills. There is drinking of course in the bars and *cantinas*; but the thing which makes drink a special curse, is the fact that *pulque* can be had at refreshment stands, at almost any grocery store, and is drunk like water.

Pulque is the sap gathered from the *maguey* or century plant, and its production forms one of the major industries of the upper central plateau. As one nears the capital on a train from almost any direction, he sees long rows of massive gray-green plants, stretching away to the horizon. At the proper time the bud is cut, its removal leaving a hollow cup. This cup then fills with a whitish, muddy sap. The *pulque*-gatherer inserts a long reed into this basin, and sucks out the juice, letting it fall into a pouch on the side of the reed. The sap is sweet when first gathered, and is called "*agua miel*" or honey water. But it sours and ferments very quickly, decomposition setting in so rapidly that it must be consumed within forty-eight hours after being gathered. So important is the industry that "*pulque* trains" run into the capital, just like milk trains in an American city. Often the sap is carried in skin bottles, hung over the backs of burros.

Almost everybody drinks *pulque*; without it life seems intolerable. A Mexican who had secured a good position in South America returned, as he said, because he could not get *pulque*. He frankly stated that he would rather live in poverty in Mexico, and have his *pulque*, than to live in ease and be deprived of his

favorite beverage. Students of national affairs are not unmindful of the baleful effect of the unlimited use of the drink, and already the government has issued an edict forbidding the further planting of *maguey*. The life of the plant is about fourteen years, so that shortly it can be hoped that this scourge will no longer afflict Mexican society.

However, there is bootleg *maguey*, and one notices that new plantings are being made in spite of the prohibition of the government. Just what the attitude of the administration will be when these young plants begin to produce, remains to be seen. An official questioned upon the subject gave it as his opinion that the government would take the position that after a certain number of years from the passing of the edict, all of the plants then in the ground should have ceased bearing, and would summarily prohibit the sale of the liquor. Due to this restriction on planting, the price of *pulque* in the capital has risen from two *centavos* a quart, to ten; but the average worker would rather cut down on the food supply, than upon his drink. One sees women selling the beverage from earthen jars to the soldiers travelling as escorts with the trains, and *agua miel*, in its unfermented stage, is even fed to nursing babies.

Tequila. It is from the distilled juice of the *maguey* that the Mexican fire-water *tequila* is made. This is an alcoholic drink with such a savage kick, that an American who tried it for the first time declared that he could get exactly the same effect with much less expense, merely by kissing the spark plugs of his automobile while the engine was running. In one part of the state of Nayarit so important is the industry, that the town where the liquor is made is called "Tequila."

When the train passes, vendors are on hand with bottles in baskets, and sell the liquor to the passengers through the car windows. In completing the score against strong drink as a social and moral ill, we must not forget the fact that the growing of so much *maguey*, removes many hectares of the richest land from the production of food stuffs.

The Paralysis of Conscience. But the greatest ill from which Mexico suffers is one which seems to go down to the very well-springs of her life. Everywhere there is a lack of conscience; no love for right, because it is right; no hatred of wrong, because it is wrong. With all their horrible religious customs, and with cannibalism at the altars, the Aztec Indians had principles of self-restraint, of sobriety, of chastity, and of the duty of care for the poor and afflicted, which were superior to those of their conquerors. With the establishment of the government of the viceroys, the people saw graft, thievery, drunkenness, oppression, intolerance; and they became apt pupils of what they saw. Religion unfortunately placed its emphasis upon the observance of certain rites; and compliance with certain forms, while those who posed as leaders, were too often foremost in the very evils which ought to have been condemned.

The Aztecs had been taught chastity; the Spaniards came with unbridled passions, while the *hacendado* who was little short of a deity upon his vast estate, instead of being an example of sobriety, of gentleness and chastity, was usually the very opposite of all these virtues.

During all the days of turmoil which followed nominal independence, public officials came into power only that they might steal enough out of the public treasury

to make life easy during the remainder of their days. Government was for the most part in the hands of a succession of military thieves; and so common has speculation on the part of officials in Mexico become, that one who does not take advantage of his office is thought by his friends to be lacking in appreciation of his opportunities. Always Juan García has seen his wrongs paraded as a rallying banner by the leaders who would seize power, only to be trodden in the dust after that power has been gained. Thus opportunism has become the watchword of the nation, and priest, *patrón* and politician, have poisoned for the Indian the springs of conduct at their very source.

It is this background which has weakened the moral fibre of the people. Religion is too frequently a matter of pure emotionalism and the observance of certain rites and ceremonies. It has nothing to do with conduct.

Hoffman's "Christ in Cethsemane" was being shown in one of the large department stores of an American city, which has a considerable Mexican population. The exhibition was free to the public, and many Mexican people came in daily. One afternoon a clerk was particularly impressed by a woman who entered robed in the conventional black mantilla of the humbler class. For an hour she studied the painting upon her knees. Great sobs shook her breast, while the tears coursed constantly down her cheeks. Her meditation over, she rose to her feet, looked this way and that, and then slipped a valuable vase beneath the folds of her black mantilla.

It has taken four centuries of oppression and of misrule to stifle the conscience in the breast of Juan García: how many centuries will be needed to awaken it?

III

THE GRAB OF THE CONQUERORS

THE great cathedral of Mexico City is leaning. Large fissures mar its face, so that the massive structure seems about to fall.

Because the city was built upon a lake, the subsoil is insecure, and engineers face the problem of making the foundations of a building sufficiently broad to support the weight of the superstructure.

Just as faults have appeared in the beautiful buildings of Mexico City, so also the social and economic structure of the country is unstable, because the foundations are faulty. Always a very few have owned most of the land; and no people can be economically safe or permanently happy until there has been a general distribution of this elementary source of human wealth. The Spanish conquerors at the beginning laid an insecure foundation; and Mexican history ever since has been a series of efforts, sometimes inarticulate, to solve the problem of the land.

The system introduced by the conquerors immediately divided society into two classes, ten per cent. composing the autocratic, governing group, ninety per cent. the slaves bound to the soil. To this iniquitous organization, Juan García owes all his ills, social, economic, spiritual. Because ninety per cent. of the people have earned only enough to supply the most elemental needs, there was no market for what the country could produce; and the poverty of the

majority impoverished also the minority. Juan García is ignorant, because learning was thought to be unnecessary for one who labored only with his hands. Little better than a beast of burden, he lived in hovels, and became the prey of ill-health, immorality, high infant mortality and all the evils which follow poor housing. He lost the initiative of a free man, because the system removed the chances of success; and his masters, through the constant habit of commanding, lost the spirit of coöperation and of group action. Mexico's problem is economic, not political; and two of its important phases are ignorance and arrogance.

To know Juan García, therefore, we must understand something of his struggle to win back the ground which has been watered by his sweat and his tears.

The Country of Anahuac. The Indian nations forming the triple alliance, and the tribes subject to them, lived in a country which they called "Anahuac." A line drawn west from a point a little north of Vera Cruz through Querétaro, and on to the Pacific Ocean, would transcribe the northern boundary of their kingdom, while approximately the western boundaries of the states of Chiapas and Tabasco would form its southern limits.

The book of tributes used by the Aztecs indicates that large crops were raised. Guided by the fact that one-third of all their produce was paid in tribute, we come to the conclusion that the corn alone raised by the subject tribes in this area amounted in a single year to 1,620,000 bushels. This of course does not include the crops raised by the people belonging to the triple alliance. J. Silva Herzog, of the Department of Statistics, is authority for the statement that in the area covered by the kingdom of Anahuac, there lived

not less than sixteen million people, or more than the total present population of all Mexico.

The Land System of the Aztecs. To produce such crops, the land must have been fairly well distributed. The agrarian system was somewhat complex. There was land set apart for the king, and for the support of his household, and for the nobles. This land was worked by landless men, either for hire, or on shares. Then there was land dedicated to the support of the army, and vast holdings which were cultivated to maintain the priests and the whole religious system. It is said that when the Spaniards came not less than one million persons dedicated to the service of the temples were thus supported.

The lands assigned to the people were divided into two classes. First, was the communal land, corresponding roughly to the *ejido* of Philip II, and located just outside the town. Then there was the land which was parcelled out to the families.

A Different Conception of Land. There are certain interesting features about the land system of the Aztecs which immediately suggest themselves. The Mexican Indian's conception of land was entirely different from the idea to which we are accustomed, for he knew nothing about the right of private possession. All the lands belonged not to the individuals or to the groups which worked them, but to the emperor. Land to the Aztec mind was a social obligation. Neither the nobles nor the people had the right to sell it. Moreover, failure to sow crops was a social sin, because it removed from production a part of the patrimony of the tribe. If this neglect persisted the land was summarily taken away and given to another. Ownership of land thus clearly rested with the government and

its cultivation was a social duty. An understanding of this fact is necessary for an appreciation of the land question in Mexico at the present time.

The land system of the Aztecs therefore presented the strange anomaly of being frankly socialistic while emanating from a monarchical government. It was extremely faulty in that it impoverished the subject tribes for the benefit of the members of the triple alliance, and in that it removed such a large group of the people from production, for the support of religion. But with all its faults, it seems to have worked far better than the capitalistic systems which succeeded it.

"By Their Fruits." If our thesis that the soil is the foundation of all socialized life be correct, we should expect to see certain commendable institutions built upon this land system of the Aztecs; and in our expectation, we are not disappointed. There existed a college for women in Tezcoco, when in Europe, woman was considered little better than a slave. Drunkenness and robbery being capital crimes were practically unknown, and the wealthy were not allowed to escape punishment because of the influence of their money. Attendance upon the temple ceremonies was made a condition of land-holding, and the people bathed twice a day as a religious custom. There exists an old parchment which contains certain wise admonitions of a father to his son. He is admonished to "care for the birds and the gardens, as this is a sign of nobility." He is advised to live by his labor, and to serve the gods with love. "If some one bores you with a long recital," says the father, "do not constantly spit, and get up, but listen to him with patience." The son is also counselled to respect

old people and women, and to comfort the poor and afflicted "with good words and good deeds."

The Coming of the Conquerors. Into this Aztec society with its faults and its virtues came the Spaniards under Cortés. They were able to conquer a people whose chief business was war, because the inhabitants of Anahuac had not extended the blessings of their civilization to the tribes which they had subjected. Indeed the Aztecs were glad to keep on bad terms with the Tlascaltecos because a large number of human sacrifices were necessary each year to maintain the brilliancy of the sun, and it would have been impossible to secure an adequate number of captives if all the tribes had been at peace with the triple alliance. Cortés therefore found ready allies. The Spaniards did not conquer the inhabitants of Anahuac; they persuaded the inhabitants of Anahuac to conquer each other.

Superstition also aided the victors. Far back in the history of the people of the valley, there had been a priest by the name of Quetzalcoatl. He is described as being of light complexion, and wearing a beard. One day he disappeared in the west in the general direction of Vera Cruz, and there grew up a tradition that he would return whence he had gone. Gradually he became a god, and a great shrine was built in his memory, on the plain of Teotihuacán. When the Spaniards appeared at Vera Cruz, light complexioned in comparison with the Indians, and wearing beards, the priests were sure that they were the descendants of Quetzalcoatl, come in fulfillment of their prophecy. They counselled non resistance, and Moctezuma hesitated and temporized until the Spaniards were within the city.

The history of the conquest is too well known to need repetition. It is a drama of cruelty and deceit, of extortion and cupidity, but a story which is replete with instances of heroism on both sides. The chief interest of the Spaniards was in gold. They rifled the treasures of Moctezuma, and after the city had fallen, soaked the feet of Cuauhtémoc in oil, and roasted them over the fire, in an effort to extort from him the hiding place of the treasure which they believed to be sequestered. There are those who are sure that to this day, the bulk of the gold and silver of the Aztecs lies buried somewhere under Mexico City.

After the conquest, began the division of the lands. The Spanish conquerors were buccaneers financed by private resources. The conquest of Mexico, therefore, was a gamble, and it was understood that the backers of the enterprise were to be reimbursed by the spoils of the victory. Anatole France tells us that the origin of the right of private property is found in conquest, and that conquest is based upon might. The Spaniards went farther, and were able to find spiritual justification for the robbery of the Mexicans. By the papal bull of May 4, 1493, Alexander VI had solemnly divided the new world between the faithful sovereigns, the kings of Spain and Portugal; all of Mexico therefore belonged to the king of Spain, and could be given by him to whomsoever he desired.

Slaves, as Well as Land. The donations to the conquerors were large and liberal, for they received not only the land, but the people who lived upon it. With pious zeal, God was always made to have His part in the bargain. The Indians were pagans; if they could only be saved from the horrors of the damned in the world to come, they might well afford to give up their lands

in this world. And so was developed the system of "*ecomendas*," whereby the soldier on receiving a tract of land, was made responsible for the conversion of the Indians living upon it.

By this clever arrangement, Cortés was given an estate which covered twenty-five thousand square miles, and contained twenty-three towns, with all the land which had been the patriarchal right of the people in these towns. But there was a feature which was even more iniquitous. Spain was so far away, and communication so difficult, that the prerogatives of sovereignty were also passed over with the land, the conqueror even assuming the power of life and death. The *hacienda* of Cortés included all the present state of Oaxaca, and parts of the states of Guerrero, of Mexico, and Michoacán. It is interesting to note that his holdings passed down almost in their entirety from father to son, and were not broken up until disentailment was enforced at the beginning of the nineteenth century. At that time the estate contained 150,000 souls.

But it must not be thought that Cortés was the only one who received princely donations of land. Pedro de Alvarado, who is said to have jumped an unbelievable distance across a water-course the night the Spaniards escaped from the city, was awarded a vast region around Xochimilco, inhabited by thirty thousand people. One of the especial favorites of the Spanish king, who did not even figure in the conquest, was allotted the whole of what is now the state of Guanajuato. Even the humblest soldier in the army was awarded his landholding, the smallest portion given to any being a parcel of 400 hectares, or about 900 acres. Indeed, the Spanish crown was so liberal that there

are some old Spanish land grants which set a boundary, and then describe the property as extending "as far as the eye can reach." It goes without saying that most of the Spaniards who happened to be thus endowed, were endowed also by their Creator with most remarkable eyesight. So it was that shortly after the completion of the conquest, the whole of Mexico was owned by a very few persons. Before the end of the sixteenth century, there were 507 of these *haciendas*, and they comprised the richest of Mexican land.

The "Ejido" on Philip II. It is only fair to add that the Spanish sovereign and his counsellors saw very early the disastrous folly of these large land donations. The Franciscan fathers early complained of the unfortunate condition of the Indians. Furthermore, the land system established after the conquest made production on any considerable scale impossible, for the bulk of the people were too poor to buy more than the bare necessities of life. The Spanish sovereign therefore set himself the task of undoing as far as possible what he had done. In 1573 Philip II attempted to reestablish the system of communal lands, through the enactment of a law creating "*ejidos*" for each town. The word "*ejido*" means "exit" and takes its name from the fact that the land thus given was always located just at the outside limits of the town. The "*ejido*" of Philip II was a square league, comprising about 1,200 hectares. The benevolent king of Spain thus gave to a whole town of Indians, land which was only four times as great as the amount which he gave to the humblest of the soldiers of the conquest.

A Nation of Serfs. But while we are thinking of this injustice we must remember also the Indians liv-

ing upon the land. Their homes were miserable hovels, they earned barely enough to hold body and soul together, and through the debt system were bound to the land upon which they worked. It was impossible for an Indian laboring upon one *hacienda* to go to another. They were considered part of the property, and were even bought and sold. In an old ledger there is an account of a certain man named Soto who tells of having bartered eighty Indians for a horse and three for a cake of cheese. They were employed almost as slaves upon public works, and the great buildings of the colonial period, including even the cathedrals, are cemented with their blood. For a hundred years efforts were made to drain the lake about the city of Mexico. Finally it was confessed that these efforts were a failure, although "a vast sum of money had been spent, together with the lives of 70,000 Indian laborers."

Mexico had never known the feudal system, but it was introduced from Europe; and its effects can well be understood when we realize that the 16,000,000 souls inhabiting the kingdom of Anahuac, before the conquest, had dwindled to a total of 7,000,000 for all New Spain at the end of the colonial epoch. No wonder the Pope thought it necessary to issue a bull reminding the *hacendados* of New Spain that the Indians were human beings with eternal souls.

The Cry for Freedom. And it is easy to understand why these same Indians flocked to the standards of Hidalgo, the priest of the little village of Dolores. True, they recognized him as a friend; but the ferment of liberty had been working, and even the priest himself was surprised by the great crowds of unarmed Indians who followed after him.

On Sunday morning, September 16, 1810, after a night of conference, Hidalgo rang the church bells long before the accustomed time. When the people had gathered he called upon them to rise in the defense of their liberties, exclaiming at the end of his discourse: "Long live independence! Long live America! Death to bad government!" It was the battle cry of the oppressed natives who were willing to pit their lives in a struggle that the rights and privileges which had been taken away with their lands might be restored.

At the head of six hundred men, Hidalgo set out from the church. Passing the shrine of the Virgin in the little town of Atotonilco, he took from the altar a banner of the Virgin of Guadalupe, fixed it to the point of his lance, and cried, "Long live our Lady of Guadalupe!"

Shortly after, he was joined by Allende, a captain of cavalry, and the war of independence was on. It was a war, not so much against the mother country Spain, as against the Spaniards who had taken away the lands of the Indians. At first the impetuous enthusiasm of the natives carried everything before them, but after almost a year of fighting the forces of reaction triumphed, and Hidalgo and Allende were captured, and promptly executed. Before he faced the firing squad, Hidalgo was stripped of his priestly vestments, and then excommunicated by the bishop. His head and that of Allende were suspended in iron cages, and hung from the corners of the fort of Guanajuato. And there they hung for eleven years, as a grim warning of the fate of those who dared question the right of conquest and special privilege.

It is interesting to note that the independence for which Hidalgo and Allende gave their lives, was finally

achieved by the very group against whom they had fought. The return of the liberal government in Spain frightened the Spaniards and the clericals, for the constitution of 1812 provided for the confiscation of part of the property of the church, established the freedom of the press, and abolished the Inquisition. In alarm the reactionary forces decided that safety lay only in independence from a country which would take such steps. The new viceroy was met with opposition, and the next year Iturbide, the royalist general, had himself crowned as Augustin I, emperor of Mexico. He lasted less than a year, however, when he was overthrown by Santa Ana, who proclaimed a republic.

Figs Grafted to Thistles. The Constitution which was adopted with the gaining of independence was a queer conglomeration of elements which were taken from the Spanish constitution of 1812, the constitution of the United States, and a former document which had been adopted by a group of Mexican revolutionists at Apatingán. This constitution marks the beginning of Mexican turmoil and revolution, for it was an attempt to graft democratic institutions upon an autocratic root. With frank admiration for the measure of success in free government which had been achieved in the United States, the Mexican revolutionists believed that liberty and happiness are to be found in forms of government, rather than in fundamental changes in the social order. The constitution promised things which it was impossible for any president to deliver, without first changing the economic and social basis of society.

This fact explains the kaleidoscopic, cat-and-dog time which was Mexican history from the gaining of independence down until the days of Díaz. Because

of the feeling of dissatisfaction which has always existed; because the constitution promised much, and gave little, it has always been possible for some military leader to start a revolution, upon the charge, ever true, that the government was disloyal to the constitution. Then the new president, inaugurated through the success of a military coup, has found it impossible in his turn to live up to the constitution, without overturning institutions whose roots go down into the life of the nation.

The social order, therefore, after the gaining of independence remained exactly as it was before. The Indians had fought for their rights, but they had only succeeded in exchanging one set of nominal rulers for another. Allegiance which had formerly been paid to Spain, was now given to whatever oligarchy happened to be in power in Mexico City. But the currents of revolution which have swept over the country have never really affected Juan García who has lived out on the *hacienda*. Rulers might come, and rulers might go; but the only master he has known has been the *patrón* on the estate.

As far as the political situation was concerned, the borrowing of a constitution which has been the outgrowth of Anglo-Saxon institutions, was like tying roses upon a cactus plant.

Soon the blossoms withered; the problem of the land remained unsolved.

IV

THE CHURCH

THE most beautiful thing in all Mexico is the cathedral at Tepozitlán.

An hour's ride on the National Railways takes one to the little station of Cuauhtitlán. There a tiny bus, perched on the chassis of the ever-present Ford awaits for the brief journey to the monastery of the Jesuits, with its beautiful church.

Hard indeed it is to describe Tepozitlán. The monastery and the little town which has grown around it, are far removed from the noise and the bustle of the capital city. Upon a slight elevation, the church stands out like a jewel in an exquisite setting against the blue of the morning sky. It dominates the landscape; and its haunting, refined beauty dominates one's soul.

Drawing nearer, the façade is found to be covered with sumptuous plaster work, while far above, the towers, perfect in their chaste beauty seem to be vocal with the silvery sound of bells even when they are dumb.

One who is not a disciple of the cult of extreme simplicity catches his breath with the sheer beauty of the interior; for from atrium to altar the Chirriguresco brothers and their disciples have plied their craft. Huge examples of wood carving carried out to the last detail, cover the walls. In it all there is the sense of vigor; of motion. The garments of the apostles snap

in the breeze, and the carvers have hollowed out the wood far behind the folds. All of this intricate carving is overlaid with gold leaf. The hard-headed American walks up immediately and raps it with his fingernails. It rings true. What if the smoke stains of altar candles could only be washed away and floods of electric light turned upon this gorgeous example of the art of the church fathers? It is said that each one of the altars in this church cost \$1,000,000.

One steps out of the dim light, and at the very door, a crowd of the lame, the halt and the blind assault him. "A little pity, for the love of God!" "A tiny succor!" "Have mercy!"

Tepozitlán, its walls covered with gold leaf and its multitude of poor at the door, is symbolic of the Church in Mexico.

The First Clerics. When the first twelve Franciscan fathers landed at Vera Cruz, they brought nothing but the rags upon their backs; and as they trudged from the port to the capital the Indians exclaimed, "*motolinia!*" The leader of the group, asking the meaning of the word, was told that it signified "poor fellow!" He requested, therefore, that the experience might be in the nature of a new baptism for himself, and that "*Motolinia*" he might be called. The name he carried to his grave, and a street in Mexico City commemorates his life of real service for the Indians.

The Adventurers. None can deny that the first Franciscan fathers came to Mexico with holy purposes, nor can one doubt the desire of the rulers in Spain to protect the Indians. But the lust of easy gold, and the lure of the country's wealth, proved the undoing of the Church. So great was the task of carrying the Gospel to the Indians that the fathers became care-

less in their ordinations, and across the sea scurried a horde of adventurers cloaking their cupidity with the vestment. It is said that Archbishop Núñez de Haro, during his career of twenty-eight years, turned eleven thousand new priests through his ecclesiastical mill.¹ As early as 1644 the town council of Mexico City sent a Memorial to Philip IV asking that no more priests be sent, as there were already six thousand, without employment, and "living off the fat of the land."

Theoretically the Indians were not supposed to pay tithes; practically, they were exempt from nothing. The tithes were levied upon the products of all herds, flocks and farms. Not only were the gross returns assessed, but all incidental income such as that from butter, eggs, cheese and hides. The collection of the tithes was accomplished through *arrendatarios*, or officers who bought the privilege. Hiding income to escape the payment of the tithe was counted as the most heinous of sins. It was punished by excommunication, and from it, no priest had power to absolve.²

The Alms Gatherers. Not content with the tithe, the Church also sent *demandantes* whose business it was to collect alms, after the *arrendatarios* had taken all they could get. They worked with mule trains, upon which was loaded the image of the patron saint of the order for which the contributions were to be taken. Under this holy tutelage all were willing to give.

As the tithes and the alms were collected in produce, it became necessary for the priests to set up markets.

¹ Phipps, *Some Aspects of the Agrarian Question in Mexico*, p. 46.

² *Ibid.*, p. 49.

Having no capital invested in their produce stands, the priests could easily outsell their competitors. Furthermore, the sale of the tithes and the alms, was the gateway through which the servants of the Church entered the whole realm of commerce. So extensive did their operations become, that the Third Ecclesiastical Council of New Spain saw itself compelled to forbid the clergy from engaging in the slave trade!

The money gotten from the tithes and the alms was usually invested in land, which in turn produced more income, which again was turned into more land.

Clerical Fees. Another fertile field for wealth which the Church did not neglect was found in the fees for funerals, weddings and christenings. The charges for such services were graduated to fit individual cases, but were always as much as the traffic would bear. With that habit of procrastination which is one of the faults of Juan García, he has taken his wife to live with him, agreeing with her that just as soon as the next crop should be harvested, or the sale of a cow could be made, the marriage would be celebrated by the priest. And while the Church has busily taught that only marriage by her is legal, she has put the fees so high that Juan could not pay them. Then holding up hands of holy horror, she has called him and his wife adulterers, and their children bastards.

The Conscience-Smitten Conquerors. To the lands bought by money obtained through tithes and alms, were added those which came through inheritance. As the first generation of conquerors reached their last pillows, they came with consciences which were none too easy. They had lived lives of violence, they had despoiled the Indians of their land, and they had enslaved their bodies. Cortés himself, in one of the last



CATHEDRAL AT TEPOZOTILAN, CALLED THE MOST BEAUTIFUL IN MEXICO



CATHEDRAL AT TEPEOTILAN, CALLED THE MOST BEAUTIFUL IN MEXICO

letters written to his son, explained that as he neared the end, the question of the treatment of the Indians kept recurring to him, and he counselled his son seriously to consider whether they ought to be kept in slavery. These pious last moments of the conquerors, were not without their economic value. At the time when extreme unction was administered, it was always easy for the priest tactfully to suggest a salve for the burdened conscience, and as a result, large tracts of lands at the beginning of the second generation, began to pass into the hands of the Church.

By purchase, by gift and by legacy, not less than half of all the real estate in Mexico at the beginning of the nineteenth century belonged to ecclesiastical orders. Humboldt says four-fifths; but it is perhaps better to err on the side of conservatism and accept the figures given by Don Lucas Alamán, Catholic historian on the subject.

Land of the Jesuits. In 1767 the Jesuits were expelled without warning from all the dominions of Spain, and of course were compelled to leave Mexico at the same time. The properties of the order were therefore confiscated by the state, and at the time a list of its real estate was published. In the bishopric of Mexico, there were 41 *haciendas*; in Puebla, 53; in Oaxaca, 2; in Valladolid, 15; in Guadalajara, 3; and in Durango, 14. This makes a total of 128 *haciendas* owned by the Jesuit order alone in the whole country.

During all this time, the viceroys in New Spain, as well as the kings at home were not unmindful of the evils of so much church-owned property, and as early as 1535, Carlos V promulgated a law prohibiting the giving of land to the Church. This law, however, was constantly violated, and a few years later it was re-

placed by another, providing a tax of 15 per cent. on all inheritances which were left to the Church. The zeal of the state was prompted not so much by thoughtfulness of the people, who were gradually losing their patrimony, as by the fact that the church-owned properties were free from taxation. It was not until 1737, however, that the state saw the real way to curb the evil, and began to collect taxes upon the real estate owned by ecclesiastical orders. By this time, the horse had been stolen. So the Church continued in full and undisturbed enjoyment of its vast properties, until the laws of reform were passed by Benito Juárez, and written into the Constitution of 1857.

The Struggle Against the Church. Juárez was a pure blooded Zapotec Indian, living in the state of Oaxaca. He had studied for the priesthood, finally giving it up, in preference for the law. As Governor of his state, he had instituted noteworthy reforms which had so attracted the attentions of politicians in the capital, that he was invited to become Minister of Justice in the President's cabinet. Because he himself had risen from the peon class, he was a liberal of the liberals. In 1855 he succeeded in having passed what is known as the "*Ley Juárez*," which brought the clergy and the army under the jurisdiction of the civil courts.

Immediately the priests were alarmed. This Indian was striking at the very foundation of society. "Benefit of clergy" was a God-given institution, and a struggle to defend His will, would be a holy war. Under the leadership of a priest, Francisco Ortega y García, the revolution was started at Zacapoaxtla, and the forces of the Church immediately took possession of Puebla, which has always been a clerical stronghold.

President Comonfort raised an army to send against the rebels; but as too often has happened in Mexican history, the general whom he sent passed over to the enemy. Another army was raised, and another general sent; and the same thing occurred. President Comonfort, then trusting nobody but himself, gathered 15,000 men, and went against the forces of the clericals, under General Haro, winning a decisive victory.

Taking Back the Lands. Immediately upon his return, the President issued a decree providing for the seizure of the wealthy estates of the clergy in Puebla, in order to secure funds to pay the cost of a needless war. There followed soon after the famous "*Ley Lerdo*" or the decree of "*desamortización*," which provided, not for the confiscation, but for the sale of the estates of the Church.

But there was one serious slip in this whole arrangement. The proceeds from the sale of these properties were to go of course into the coffers of the orders; and the money thus gained was used to foment the revolution. Juárez who had become the leader of the liberal forces was compelled to flee the city, and to make his headquarters at Guadalajara. Once he was captured, and actually lined up against a wall before the firing squad, and was able to escape, only because the peon Indians who were detailed to shoot him, deliberately disobeyed orders. Later, Juárez would probably have lost his life had he not been seeking aid in the United States, for twice during his absence, the liberal forces suffered staggering defeats. The second time, at Tacubaya, fifty-three officers, who had surrendered under guarantees of protection, were shot. Among these were six surgeons, one of them a British subject. This massacre later caused the recognition of the Juárez

government by the United States and also by Great Britain.

Thus encouraged, and in order to hamstring the Church in the war, Juárez issued his famous "Reform Laws." These laws boldly provided for the nationalization of the property of the clergy, for the establishment of civil, instead of religious marriages, for the suppression of communities which were subject to the ecclesiastical, and not to the civil authorities, and for the civil control of cemeteries.

The effect was immediate. The clericals, financially weakened, borrowed \$15,000,000 from Jecker, a Swiss banker, giving bonds which realized only \$750,000. Then, to cap the climax, they seized in the British legation \$630,000 which had been placed there under seal. Soon after, the clerical government fell, and Juárez returned to Mexico City.

There followed the fiasco of Maximilian, when the clergy and the conservatives sought through foreign intrigue to do what they had been unable to accomplish upon the field of battle. But when the forces of Napoleon were withdrawn upon representations made by the United States, Juárez was able to handle the situation, and the unfortunate Maximilian was captured and shot.

Thus ended the struggle; thus passed the great estates out of the hands of the Church.

Friends of the Oppressors. But the record of the Church in cornering the land and holding him a slave, the Mexican can never forget. Nor can he forget that each time he has raised his head and tried to strike off his shackles, the Church has been quick to strike him down. He can never forget the blood of his brothers and his fathers and his cousins, which shed in the de-

fence of their liberties cries out unto him from the ground. Nor can he ever forget that in a thousand upper rooms, the servants of the Church are plotting even yet to turn back the wheels of time, to take from him the blessings of his new liberty, and to snatch from his dry lips the cup of learning.

Is it any wonder, therefore, when Obregon sent Samuel O. Yudico to find out what the rebel general Cedilla wanted, that he should have received the reply:

"I want land. I want ammunition so that I can protect my land after I get it in case somebody tries to take it away from me. And I want plows and I want schools for my children, and I want teachers, and I want books and pencils and blackboards and roads. And I don't want any church or any saloon. That's all."¹

The State of the Church. One cannot talk with Juan García in his humble home, or read the long story of his suffering, without understanding the reasons for the harsh provisions of the constitution of 1917, with regard to ecclesiastical orders. Harsh and unreasonable they would be, where normal relations exist between Church and State; but in Mexico these relations have always been abnormal. Always the Church has been active in politics; and even after the revolution of 1910 the Clericals immediately organized the "Catholic Party" to take part in the elections of 1912. All the forces of the Church were cast into the struggle—the pulpit, the confessional, the fear of eternal torment. The symbols of the Church were in evidence on election day, and some of the ballot boxes were marked: "Here you vote for God."²

¹ *Survey Graphic*, Vol. V, p. 148.

² Dillon: *Mexico on the Verge*, p. 191.

Just what has been the result of this abnormal participation of the Church in politics, as reflected in the constitution of 1917?

All clergymen performing the duties of religion must be native Mexicans; all primary education must be secular, and no religious body or clergyman of any creed may establish or maintain primary schools; monastic orders cannot be maintained; clergymen must not criticize the government, the constitution, nor the duly elected authorities; they may not vote, nor assemble for political purposes, nor hold office; political meetings may not be held in churches, and religious periodicals may not comment upon national affairs; all church property has become the property of the nation, and no new church buildings can be built without permission of the government; all clergymen must register; state legislatures shall fix the maximum number of clergymen in any locality; clergymen cannot inherit by will from clergymen of the same religious creed, nor from any private individual not related by blood within the fourth degree.

Surely by such laws, one would think the Church shorn of all political power. The Delilah of the revolution could not have been more thorough.

Calles and Religion. The present clash was precipitated by the enforcement on the part of the Calles government of the provision requiring the registration of the priests. Enforcement was to begin July 31, 1926. The law was not class legislation, for it did not single out the clergy of the Roman Catholic Church, nor did it single out the clerical profession, as members of all other professions are required to register. But it did involve the recognition of the supreme power of the civil government. As Calles has so often stated, "A

government within a government cannot be tolerated." And right there was the rub. There have been bulls and manifestos and encyclical letters innumerable which have declared the ecclesiastical power supreme. The Church felt and still feels that the destinies of Mexico are not alone at stake. To yield in Mexico, is to yield before the whole world.

And so, by order of the hierarchy, the clergy went on strike August first. Then the government had committees appointed in each place to care for the buildings; to keep them open, and to provide opportunity for all who cared, to enter and worship. As a result, all over Mexico, the people are coming and going in the churches. Occasionally one finds a lay reader leading in an informal service, but for the most part the worship is individual. The hierarchy has forbidden the clergy to function until the government changes its attitude, while the government has prohibited them from functioning until they shall have registered in conformity with the law. There is a deadlock, but the government has not closed the churches. On the contrary, it is making every effort to keep them open.

Who Shall Back Up? Goaded, however, by the age-old encroachments of the Church upon the authority of the State, the government has now asserted its supremacy in a realm where it has neither the right nor the training to dictate. Usurpation has been met by usurpation. Undoubtedly the constitution curtails free speech for a group of its citizens, and undoubtedly the State is not qualified to determine the number of clericals who ought to serve a given area. Peace can come only by compromise.

During the days of the viceroys, a court of regal splendor was maintained in Mexico City, and there was

stolid insistence by the courtiers upon their rights of position. One day two gentlemen of the court, driving in their carriages, met in a narrow street. The way was not wide enough for them to pass; for either to back up meant to acknowledge his inferiority to the other. And so they sat glaring in their carriages from noon of one day until noon of the next; and the quarrel was ended only by the order of the viceroy that, at a given signal, both should back out of the narrow street.

In the present struggle between Church and State, some super viceroy is needed who can point out the ways in which both can profitably and gracefully yield.

What About the Mexican? But while the Church spars about the ring with the government, what has become of Juan García? He has been taught to depend upon the spiritual ministrations of his Church. He has been taught that he must confess his sins; and his Church has taken his confessor away from him. He has been taught that worship through the intermediary of a priest is essential to the welfare of his soul; and his Church has barred for him her altars. He has been taught that without the sanction of the Church, marriage is adultery; and his Church has made it impossible for him to receive her sanction. He has been taught that to go before his Judge unbaptized and unshriven is to be consigned without trial to eternal torment; and his Church has taken away those who could perform the sacraments. Poor Juan is again up against the problem as to whether he shall exchange his new won schools and his land for the blessing of his Church, and for the house or many mansions in the sky.

The Church indeed is like a tree, whose roots have been going down for centuries into the soil of the

nation's life. As the branches have grown they have obstructed traffic, until some hardy street trimmer has had courage enough to lop a few of them off. Finally the revolution of 1910 cut the whole tree close to the ground. But the roots, still nourished in the soil of the nation, are constantly sending up new shoots.

Counting on Revolution. It was upon this vitality that the hierarchy counted. It was unthinkable that the people would give up their religious privileges, or let their children go unconfirmed, or live in what the Church called adultery, or die unshriven. And it is most certain that the Church counted upon her sons to rise on that fateful day in August of 1926, when the last services were said in the churches, and when their doors were closed for the last time. But the significant thing is that the people did *not* rise. They kept on going to their churches, mumbling alone their rituals, and counting their beads. Juan had decided his question, by determining that he would keep his schools and his lands, but he would keep his religion also! Only, if necessary, he would try to keep his religion while letting his priests go!

The Contribution to the United States. But if the hierarchy has been thoughtless of the spiritual welfare of Juan García while he lives in Mexico, it has not been unmindful of his needs when he crosses the line as a laborer into the United States. Where have gone all the priests and the nuns? From the land where the Church had power to make and to mold as she willed, they have gone to seek refuge in the land established by the Puritans!

To provide employment for the thousands of refugee ecclesiastics, is the great problem which now confronts

the Roman Catholic Church. They do not speak English, and they must labor in some land whither the cost of transportation will not be great, and whence they can easily return, when the Church in Mexico again comes into her own. And so the two million Mexicans in the United States have priests and nuns to spare.

Wherever it is possible to comply with the state laws of education, parochial schools have been established; wherever it is not possible, establishments have been opened near the public schools, and the children have been encouraged to come for doctrinal instruction at the close of the afternoon session. In Amarillo, Texas, a recent survey disclosed the fact that in the public school in the Mexican quarter, there were enrolled twenty-three children, while in a four-room bungalow a few blocks away, one hundred and fifty were crowded, receiving instruction from the sisters of the Church. The principal was an American woman, and she was assisted by three Mexican nuns. At Dallas, Texas, there are more Mexican children in the parochial school than in the Cumberland Hill School, located two blocks away. The nuns must be put to work, and they are busy teaching in Spanish the children of the Mexicans. In one California town a refugee priest is reported to have gathered the children together after school hours, explaining to them that they were Mexicans, and that they must refuse to salute the stars and stripes. The question which concerns us as Americans is whether we want our future citizens trained by political refugees from a foreign country, who cannot speak our language, who do not understand our ideals, and who in many cases, when they do understand them, are hostile to them. And in answering the question, it

makes little difference whether the children be those of Juan García or of John Jones.

The State of the Protestant Church. The Protestant Church in Mexico is not, numerically speaking, a great force in the life of the nation. At the most liberal estimate, there cannot be more than ninety thousand Protestant church members, of all denominations; some place the number as low as fifty thousand. But social ties, and business obligations have bound many with bands of iron to the faith of their fathers, and the influence of Protestantism has been greater than its numerical strength would indicate. The various denominations have divided the country among them, so that there may be no overlapping, or denominational competition, and all of the ministers have registered according to the law. Like that of the Roman Catholic Church, the property of the Protestants has been nationalized. In this, it is probable that they have more reason for complaint than the dominant Church. Most of the churches in Mexico were built by the taxes of the people, and the government, in nationalizing them, feels that it is but returning to the people that which is already their own. Protestant churches, however, were most of them built by funds from the United States.

Because Protestant ministers have registered, they are allowed to function. And because the people see Roman Catholic churches without services, and Protestant churches open, there has arisen the claim that the government is showing favoritism. The constitution, however, is applied without partiality and Protestant work is suffering quite as much from the drastic nature of some of its provisions as is the Catholic. Especially is this true in the matter of schools, and in the ruling

given by the government, that public worship may not be held in private homes. Most church organizations begin with services in the houses of the people; and if an organization cannot function as a church until it have a building, its work is inhibited from the start. If a child cannot be born until it is clothed, it will never be born.

The Mote and the Beam. It is easy, however, for Protestants both north and south of the line to criticize the failings of the Church in Mexico, and then, to thank God that they are not as other men. For well-nigh three-quarters of a century the Protestant Church has assumed this attitude of criticism, and for nearly three-quarters of a century has been trying to improve upon the job it criticizes. But the dent which the Church has been able to make upon Mexico's problems is pitifully small. Lives of consecrated missionaries have been given in the service, but they have not been adequately backed by the Church at home. Old store buildings have been rented, and furnished with a few rough benches, and Juan García has been invited to worship in them; Juan García, whose soul is vibrant with music and with beauty!

The schools, which are really doing splendid work, and many of which are accredited by the government, are for the most part poorly housed, and poorly equipped. For even the foreign missionary societies have been more interested in far-off China and Japan and India, than in the problems which lie at our very back-door. This perhaps is true because the average American knows far more about the countries to the east, than he knows about Mexico.

The Ringing of the Bells! It was a clear Sunday morning in the mountains of Mexico, and a group of

American students were returning from a visit to some rural schools. During the night it had rained hard, and the air and the trees were washed clean. The bridle path, which was the only road, ran through a little valley in the mountains in the state of Tlascala. Behind them, as they jogged along on their horses, Popocatepetl and Ixtaccihuatl raised their snow-capped peaks into the heavens, while on either side of the trail stretched the endless fields of corn and *maguey*. The path, worn through hundreds of years by the feet of mules and men, had filled with rain, and then been churned into slimy mud. About the rim of the green hills, like jewels set in a vast crown, nestled the little villages—Santa Justina, San Jorge, Panotla. The air was so clear that one could see the flash of light upon the bright tile roofs, while in each village, silently, majestically, a great cathedral reared its tower into the sky.

It was Sunday morning, and so it seemed a good time to discuss the religious question. "Would the government yield in the controversy?" "Would the people at last grow tired of praying in solitude in the empty churches, or of listening to lay readers?" "Would the Church compromise and register the priests?" "Would the new administration bring a change in governmental attitude?" "Could a president be elected upon a platform of rigid enforcement of the Calles policy toward the Church?" "Could Mexico prosper without religion?"

The official from the Board of Education who journeyed with the group entered the discussion at the last question. "No," said he, speaking with vigor, "Mexico cannot live without religion. There be those in my country who believe she can, but I am not one of them.

Some adjustment must be made whereby the saving power of man's faith in God must have a place in the lives of the people."

Suddenly across the still morning air, over the fields of corn and *maguey*, came floating like silvery music, the sound of the church bells. Soon men and women began to pass, walking quickly with bare feet through the mud, to their priestless churches.

The current of the religious life of Juan García has its source far back in the rugged mountains of his nation's history. Obstructions may stop it for a moment, but it cannot be restrained.

He hears the church bells ringing in his heart. His soul goes marching on.

THE LAND OF "THE PORFIRISTAS"

DOWN in Yucatán a group of Indians were receiving back their lands, after the establishment of the revolution. It was a day of *fiesta*, and Felipe Carillo, the martyred governor, was making an address.

"Land," he exclaimed, "is like a beautiful lady; if you cherish it and court it, it will smile upon you, and give you many favors. If you neglect it, you will receive nothing but frowns and stones."

For four hundred years Juan García has been without land; and for four hundred years his portion has been frowns and stones.

Land versus Excommunication. For even after the reform laws of Juárez the land was not returned to the people. These laws provided that the lands held in vast estates should be sold to those who had been living upon them as renters. The price to be paid was that sum which would yield the amount of rent paid, calculated at six per cent. But it was necessary that the renter should exercise his right within three months, and a tax of five per cent. of the value of the property was exacted from the purchaser. If the renter failed to take advantage of his opportunity, any person was at liberty to give notice of intention to buy. The land in question was then sold at public auction, but the person making application was entitled to apply upon the purchase price one-eighth of the entire value, in case he became the successful bidder.

Of course it was the intention of the framers of the law, that the renter, the person with small means, the man without land, should benefit by this redistribution. The results, however, were exactly the opposite. Perhaps the Indian had lost his initiative; more likely he did not have the ready cash, after his years of poverty to pay the government tax of five per cent. of the value of the land which he had been working. His was a spiritual as well as a material bondage, for the Church immediately announced its intention of excommunicating all those who should exercise the rights thus given by the government, and many Indians were afraid to risk their eternal welfare for material gain. Through the years of hardship, they had been accustomed to solace themselves with the joys and beauties of the other world, and it was hard for them to barter away their birthright for a mess of pottage.

But the rich land-owners, the *hacendados*, were of less tender conscience, and as a result of the law, the vast properties of the Church were added to the already large holdings of the descendants of the conquerors. It is said that years after, many of these wealthy men were able to buy back the Paradise which they had lost through the excommunication of the Church.

The Grab of the Porfiristas. But it was during the era of Porfirio Díaz that the final despoliation of the Indian was completed. Statesmen in Mexico had long been accustomed to view with envious eyes the material prosperity of the United States of America. They were aware of the fact that the agricultural regions of the middle west were being filled with immigrants from European countries. These newcomers were developing the resources of the country, and constantly creating new wealth which added to the prosperity of all.

It seemed a simple matter to enact legislation which would encourage similar immigration to Mexico.

Two laws were passed, the first in 1875, the second, an amplification, in 1883. These laws created "surveying companies" whose business it was to survey the public domain, throwing it open to colonization. Much of this territory was highly inaccessible, and as a recompense for the labor and expense involved, the surveying companies were to receive one-third of all the land surveyed. The result of such legislation can readily be imagined. Surveying companies over night began to drag their chains into every nook and corner of the country. These companies were given the right to survey not only the public domain, but also the lands occupied by squatters, or by others who held them illegally. Titles in Mexico have always been more or less defective, simply because the Indians have never learned the value of preserving a title. As Ramon P. de Negri, the Secretary of Agriculture under Obregón has said with regard to this last robbery of the Indians: "Their fathers' bones mouldered in the graves outside the pueblo; that was title enough for them."¹

In all the long history of injustice practiced in Mexico since the days of Cortés and his followers, there has probably been none to equal that perpetrated by the surveying companies upon the defenseless Indians. As Wistano Luís Orozco, writing upon the subject, has remarked, "Any man who could not say 'godfather' to the Judge of the District, or 'tu' to the Governor, had a slim chance of retaining his property." The great land-holders were of course quick to unite in organizing these companies, thus adding the lands stolen to their already extensive domains. It is said that the survey-

¹ *Survey Graphic*, Vol. V, p. 150.

ing companies were made up of not more than twenty-nine individuals, and J. Silva Herzog, of the Bureau of Statistics in Mexico, is responsible for the statement that they surveyed twenty-four per cent. of the total area of the country.

When the colonists failed to come, these same surveyors sold at ridiculous prices much of the land which they had surveyed. Never in all history were such large estates formed as these which existed in Mexico just before the revolution of 1910. The Terrazas family owned practically all of the state of Chihuahua. It is said that once when Juan Terrazas was being presented to a friend, he was asked "*¿Es usted de Chihuahua?*" The land-owner with pride responded, "*No, señor, Chihuahua es de mí!*"

George McCutchen McBride, in his study of the land systems of Mexico, has prepared the following table which eloquently tells of the conditions which prevailed when the revolution broke out under Madero in 1910.

GENERAL STATISTICS OF LANDHOLDINGS IN 1910¹

State	Rural population	Percentage of total	Percentage of heads of families who own individual property	Percentage of heads of families who hold no individual property
Aguascalientes.....	70,507	58.5	03.6	96.4
Baja California	46,736	89.4	11.8	88.2
Campeche	63,351	73.1	02.3	97.7
Coahuila	239,736	66.2	02.3	97.7
Colima	52,556	67.6	03.1	96.9
Chiapas	361,246	82.3	04.0	96.0
Chihuahua	315,329	77.7	04.5	95.5
Durango	407,577	84.4	03.2	96.8
Guanajuato.....	776,443	71.7	02.9	97.1
Guerrero.....	545,183	91.7	01.5	98.5
Hidalgo.....	590,796	91.4	01.3	98.7

¹ American Geographical Society, Research Series, No. 12.

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Jalisco.....	932,235	77.1	03.8	96.2
Mexico.....	831,347	84.0	00.5	99.5
Michoacán	828,947	83.6	02.7	97.3
Morelos	139,467	77.7	00.5	99.5
Nuevo León	263,603	72.2	05.4	94.6
Oaxaca.....	901,442	86.7	00.2	99.8
Puebla.....	896,618	81.4	00.7	99.3
Queretaro	200,211	81.8	01.6	98.4
Quintana Roo.....	9,109	100.0	01.4	98.6
San Luis Potosi.....	488,894	77.9	01.8	98.2
Sinaloa.....	278,423	86.0	05.3	94.7
Sonora.....	219,563	82.7	04.2	95.8
Tabasco.....	175,247	93.4	04.8	95.2
Tamaulipas.....	198,770	79.6	07.7	92.3
Tepic (Nayarit).....	139,273	81.4	06.0	94.0
Tlaxcala.....	157,110	85.3	00.7	99.3
Veracruz.....	887,369	78.3	01.1	98.9
Yucatán.....	249,061	73.3	03.6	96.4
Zacatecas.....	406,214	85.1	01.9	98.1

Thus was the despoliation of the Indian made complete.

One Hundred Years of Independence. In 1910, great preparations were made in Mexico for the celebration of the one hundredth anniversary of independence. Scarce one hundred years had passed, it is true, but the leaders of the Díaz régime liked to think of the birth of the nation as having taken place upon that memorable morning when Hidalgo, the village priest, had sounded his famous battle-cry. As a matter of fact, in speaking of independence, they might as well have fixed any date, for the only independence, and the only liberty enjoyed by the mass of the people, was that which was etched so beautifully for them upon the margin of their coins. A great statue of Independence was being erected in the Paseo de la Reforma, that the anniversary might adequately be commemorated. And while the aristocracy in the capital was making preparations to celebrate the independence of Mexico, twelve million of her people were slowly dying of hunger.

The High Cost of Living. Humboldt found that the average wage paid to the peon on the farm was twenty-five cents, silver. In some places it was slightly more, in others, less. Whether or not there was anything sacred about this wage of Juan García, it persisted with monotonous consistency for one hundred years. But during this century the price of silver did not maintain the same constancy. With the fall in its value, the price of the necessities of life kept rising, so that to quote again J. Silva Herzog, of the Department of Statistics, the cost of the staple articles of peon diet had advanced as follows:

	1792	1892	1908
Rice, per 100 kilos	\$7.60 (pesos)	\$12.87	\$13.32
Corn, per hecteliter	1.75	2.50	4.89
Wheat, per 100 kilos	1.80	5 00	10.17
Beans, per 100 kilos.....	1.63	6.71	10.84

Humboldt discovered also, that with commodities at the price which prevailed in 1802, the average peon, supporting himself and his family with barely enough to keep life in the body, would on a daily wage of twenty-five centavos, be in debt to his *patrón* at the end of the year, in the sum of \$20.00 (pesos). With the price of the staples of life advancing as Mr. Silva shows they have advanced, what must have been the condition of debt in which the peon found himself when the revolution broke out under Madero in 1910?

There has always been, of course, a small group of more prosperous Indians, who have been able to retain their land. These, however, have been without political influence, and have suffered grievously because of that fact. The Mexican census of 1910 shows there were in the country 15,160,369 persons. Of these, 822 were *hacendados* or large land-owners;

396,761 were small farmers, while the peons, heads of families, numbered 3,073,069. These small land-owners paid taxes far out of proportion to the value of the properties which they farmed. One great estate called *La Gabia*, containing about 157,000 acres of land, and valued at one million, two hundred thousand pesos, paid taxes on a fictitious value of only one hundred and sixty thousand pesos. In the state of Guanajuato, the sellers of vegetables in the stands of the market, paid higher taxes than the great land-owners in the same district.

The Army of the Land-Hungry. Juan García and his brethren therefore followed the standard of Madero, because they had found life intolerable. Madero said little about land reform, but raised the cry of "Effective Suffrage and No Reëlection!" "*Sufragio Efectivo y No Reëlección!*" shouted the brown-skinned Indians who, taking their muskets, followed after him. But what they were thinking about was land, and schools, and enough to fill the aching void beneath their belts. After the victory had been won, some one asked a group of Indians why they still tarried in the capital instead of returning to their farms, and one of them replied that they were waiting for their *Sufragio Efectivo*. Two others, following Madero, were heard discussing the meaning of the phrase, *No Reëlección*, and one, with great show of wisdom, exclaimed to the other: "*Tonto!* Do you not know that so is called the wife of General Madero?"

Getting Back the Ejido. The hopeful thing about the present revolution is the fact that after all of these years of struggle, Juan is really getting back his land. It is being given back in the form of the lost *ejidos*, and as a personal allotment.

So convinced were the reformers at the time of Juárez that large land-holdings must be broken up, that even the *ejido* came under the ban. Some of these communal lands had been in existence even back in the time of the Aztec empire; but the reform laws of Juárez provided that they should pass into private ownership. That they passed into private ownership is the sad truth, but it was the ownership not of the poor and the oppressed, but of the *hacendados* who already had more land than they could cultivate efficiently, and of the foreign investors who bought them up at laughable prices.

It was because of the sense of loss in the *ejido*, that much of the efforts toward land reform which have been made since 1910 have been directed toward the return of these *ejidos* to the towns and villages. Two years before the famous constitution of 1917 was adopted, a law had been passed nullifying the previous illegal acts which had alienated communal lands from the villages. It provided a plan whereby any village with an *ejido* could take steps to secure it, and arranged for the dowry of landless individuals. This law, which was merely provisional, was later given full standing as part of the constitution.

Confiscation or Restitution? But where was the needed land to be obtained?

Never for a moment was there a doubt in the minds of the leaders of the revolution; it would come from those who had stolen it! The bones of the real pilferers lay in their graves, and the only remedy was to take it from their heirs and assigns. Nor was the redistribution to be a confiscation. In a case where injustice was evident, the communal lands, by order of the President, could be returned to the village.



NATIVE INDIAN DANCES ARE NOW IN FASHION IN THE CAPITAL

Towns without lands could be assigned them from near-by *haciendas*, the state government to reimburse the owner at a price equal to the declared value for the purpose of taxation, plus ten per cent.

Immediately there went up the cry of confiscation. For the most part, the long years of chicanery and injustice have been overlooked, and the charge of confiscation has been based upon two facts. First, it is said with a great deal of truth, that the values thus fixed do not even approximate the real worth of the property. Indeed there are certain feathered barnyard fowls which in this matter have come home to roost. Through the power which existed by virtue of land control, the great *hacendados* for years paid ridiculously low taxes upon ridiculously low valuations. The real burden of the government was placed upon the backs of the small farmers, and the small business men. Ten per cent. allowance for this deceit practised by the land-owners better represents the sense of humor of the revolutionary government than its judgment of the difference involved.

The second charge of confiscation is based upon the fact that the land has been paid for in state bonds, which are practically valueless. On the face, these bonds are to be paid in twenty annual installments, and bear five per cent. interest. They are to be received in payment of taxes, and are to be accepted as collateral on loans up to sixty-six per cent. of their face value. Many of the *hacendados* have refused to accept the bonds, and this has still further depreciated their value. The provision that they shall be received as collateral on loans is an arbitrary one, and not even the Agrarian bank established by the government, conforms to this phase of the law. Almost as a unit, the

American owners of expropriated lands have refused to accept the bonds, and are supported by our State Department in their demand that they be paid in gold. It may be said that a ready acceptance of the bonds, as the best way out of a bad bargain, would have done much to stabilize them upon the market.

Wanted: Moral Fiber. Perplexing as is the difficulty involved in this whole question of confiscation, the greatest problem now faced by the apostles of reform, is how to replace not the land, but the moral fiber which has been lost through the oppression of four centuries. So long have the peons toiled for others, that gradually there has been sapped away their will to do for themselves. Injustice has assassinated initiative. E. A. Ross tells of a philanthropic American who before the days of restitution took over an estate, and immediately informed all of the peons working upon it that the days of debt were over. By one stroke, he freed them from the accumulated obligations which had bound them to the soil. The next day, they began leaving the farm. Calling them together, the American was made to understand that they felt they had no one to protect them, that because they were no longer under obligations to the *patrón*, that he in turn would not be under obligation to them. And it was only by telling them that their debts had been restored, that they were willing to go back, contentedly to work upon the *hacienda*.¹

This phase of the problem cannot be solved by legislation. The Juan Garcías of the first generation will need all kinds of aid and financial encouragement; but just as a people learns to govern itself through self-government, so the Mexicans of the coming years will,

¹ Ross: *The Social Revolution in Mexico*, pp. 76-77.

through private initiative, regain the confidence and the self-dependence which the centuries of servitude have taken away from them. In this connection, the service of thousands of Mexican immigrants upon farms in the United States will probably be of great advantage. A Mexican in the Imperial Valley in California was asked as to his purpose in going back to the homeland. He replied that he expected to share in the allotment of the land, and explained that while he had never known how to farm while in Mexico, he had learned so much in this country, that he felt confident he could go home and make a success of the venture.

How the Land is Distributed. The machinery for the redistribution of the land consists of a National Agrarian Commission, an Agrarian Commission for each of the twenty-eight states, and a local Agrarian Committee. This last receives applications for lands from males eighteen years of age or over. Requests are acted upon by the State Commission, which makes recommendations to the National body, showing the lands in the district which are available for distribution.

From 1916 to 1926 a total of 3,588,875 hectares had been returned to 1,871 towns and 375,762 agriculturists. During the year 1927, 950,000 hectares were distributed among 76,000 individuals.

So the struggle which began with the despoliation of the Indians at the time of Cortés seems to have reached its conclusion. Inevitably the revolutionary policies of land reform mean confiscation; for the ninety per cent. of people who were landless, cannot be given property without injuring the ten per cent. The issuing of bonds is only a subterfuge, for the

owners of the land must inevitably pay both principal and interest upon the outstanding indebtedness.

After all, we are standing in the presence of a great social revolution.

VI

THE IDEALS OF THE NEW NATIONALISM

MR. JOHN JONES has land investments in Mexico; and since the revolution, certain portions of his estate have been confiscated to make *ejidos* for Indian villages. Mr. Jones has been offered state bonds, but his lawyer in Mexico City has advised him that they are worthless. From the security of his home in this country, Mr. Jones has studied the points at issue, and in his own mind has settled the whole question of land reform in Mexico. It is wholesale robbery; a denial of the rights of private ownership, upon which our modern social structure rests. The only solution to the problem is for the army of the United States to go down and "clean up Mexico" guaranteeing to him his property rights.

The Land of John Jones. Mr. Jones' home in the United States is his castle; his land he holds in absolute fee simple. His is the right to "use, abuse and enjoy." But Juan García has an entirely different conception of land. Both from the Spaniard and the Aztec he has inherited an exaggerated idea of the right of eminent domain. During the Aztec régime, the holding of land was a social responsibility. Only the right to use was transmitted; and failure to use involved loss. The Spaniards, through the bull of Alexander VI, had much the same idea. All land in New Spain was given absolutely to the king, and was assigned by him to his vassals. The trouble with Mr. Jones is that he has carried over into the land of the

Aztecs and the dons, his Anglo-Saxon conception of absolute title.

Mr. Jones also, as a typical American, has various other investments. Some of his money is in United States government bonds, which he considers "as good as gold." But the rate of interest is relatively small, a disadvantage which Mr. Jones is ready to accept, in exchange for the ease with which he can use his bonds as collateral, or turn them into cash. Then Mr. Jones has some of his money invested in conservative mortgages on real estate. The rate of interest is only six per cent.; but what could be safer than money backed by substantial American farms? But Mr. Jones forsaking the principle of "six per cent. and safety" has taken a flier or two in oil. Among his friends he has laughingly explained that a man ought not to invest any more money in unproven oil fields than he can afford to lose. The risk is very great, of course; but if he wins, his returns will be proportionately high.

When it came to the matter of investing in land in Mexico, Mr. Jones realized also the risk. He knew that the mass of the people were without land, and if he knew anything about the great social movements of history he knew that a revolution was in the offing. But the returns on his investment, because of this great element of risk, he insisted must be proportionately large. Mr. Jones unfortunately has not been as good a sport in the matter of his Mexican investments as he has in the money which he has sunk in wildcat oil schemes in his own country, and Mr. Jones is having to suffer, because it is one of the ideals of the new nationalism to preserve Mexico for the Mexicans. Juan García at last is to have a part in his own country.

Soil and Subsoil. But the problem of restitution has to do also with the treasures of the subsoil. For years before the adoption of the Constitution of 1917, there had been an insistent demand for legislation upon oil. So uncertain was the whole matter, that there were thousands of litigations pending in Mexican courts; so diverse had been the rulings already reached, that even the foreign companies were clamoring for "some sort of a law good or bad, which would free them from the mountains of decisions, isolated and contradictory, which they felt would overwhelm them."¹

It is the contention of a large part of the oil companies, that many of the provisions of the new constitution are confiscatory—a contention in which they are supported by the State Department of the United States Government.

The Plea of Mexico. The Mexican government on the other hand claims there is absolutely nothing in the law which does not conform to the principles enunciated in previous legislation upon the subject, and that rightly understood, and honestly obeyed, the law will result in the utmost liberality for the foreign investor; "always remembering" the government states in one of its many bulletins upon the subject, "that the industry of petroleum is a public utility."

The Secretariat of Industry, Commerce and Labor has this to say about the petroleum laws: "The corner stones of the law are the following: to the nation belong the oil fields; this right is inalienable; that only Mexicans, and Mexican corporations have the right to acquire concessions for exploitation; that these con-

¹ Secretaría de Industria Comercio y Trabajo: *La Ley Mexicana del Petróleo y Su Reglamento*, p. 6.

cessions can be given also to foreigners under special conditions; and that the right of exploitation shall continue only while regular work is being carried on, and the laws are obeyed."

Those who believe that there is something new under the sun in the provisions of the petroleum laws, are invited to consider the Laws of the Indies, dictated by the Spanish crown, at the time of the conquest, and from which the legal system of Mexico is derived. In book six, law four, and division three of these laws, it is expressly stated, that by right of conquest, there passed to the "royal patrimony" of the Spanish crown, "all the mines of Mexico, hidden or discovered, including the bitumens, or juices of the earth." Confirming this, King Carlos III of Spain, on May 22, 1783, promulgated his "Mining Laws" for New Spain. Division five of these laws states as follows:

"Art. 1. The mines are property of my royal crown ———

"Art. 2. Without separating them from my royal patrimony, I yield them to my vassals in property and possession, in such manner that they may sell them . . . or in any other manner dispose of the rights which they or their heirs or assigns may have in them.

"Art. 3. This concession is given under two conditions: the first, that they must contribute to my royal treasury the share of metals agreed upon; the second, that they must work and use the mines, complying with what is provided in these ordinances, so that it will be understood that they shall be lost whenever the laws which so provide shall be violated, and may be given to any other, who, according to the provisions of this law, may lay claim to them."

A comparison of these laws with Article 27, will re-

veal the fact that they are not only very similar, but almost the same in their provisions. It is the contention of the Mexican government therefore, that the oil laws of the constitution merely "reproduce in spirit and in form the principles of a classic legislation, sanctioned by use and by custom in our country for hundreds of years."¹

The Laws that Muddled the Issue. If we are to deal only with the ancient laws of the Spaniards, and the provisions of the constitution of 1917, the subject would be comparatively clear. However, on November 22, 1884, a law was passed which declared unequivocally that the petroleum was the exclusive property of the owner of the soil. In 1892, this law was repealed; in 1909 it was again passed, leaving petroleum the property of the owner of the soil when the revolution broke out a year later.

The Mexican State Department contends that in all the history of Mexico, there have been only the eight years between 1884 and 1892, and the one year between 1909 and 1910 when the treasures of the subsoil have not been the property of the nation. Furthermore, the government insists that all three laws which have muddled the issue were passed by a government which was unconstitutional, and which was overthrown for the very fact of its unconstitutionality. A further contention is that so basic is the principle of government ownership of subsoil wealth, that the laws of 1884 and 1909 were plainly invalid.

But the cry of confiscation is raised principally against the petroleum law of 1926 which provides that all companies owning concessions acquired prior to

¹ Secretaría de Industria Comercio y Trabajo: *La Ley Mexicana del Petróleo y Su Reglamento*, p. 7.

May 1, 1917, may exchange them for leases of fifty years' duration, to which is added a possible extension of thirty years, in case the oil be not exhausted at the end of the half century. It was necessary, however, for each company thus applying to have performed some "positive act" of work or construction. These leases or concessions were offered also, without the necessity of the lessee abandoning the protection of his government, as is the case in future acquisition. The law provides that companies refusing to exchange their concessions for leases prior to January 1, 1927, were to lose their property rights. A case involving this question brought on an appeal for an "*amparo*" by the Mexican Petroleum Company, and was decided by the Supreme Court in favor of the Company, on November 17, 1927; a decision which was immediately followed by new legislation on the part of Congress, guaranteeing the constitutional rights of mining companies in properties purchased prior to 1917.

Bluntly put, Mexico is only asking that she be allowed to work out some plan whereby she can be master in her own house. And given the help and sympathy of her neighbors, she has already proven that she will do all in her power to protect the interests of the foreigner, short of robbing her own people of their God-given rights.

Cultural Ideals. But the ideals of the new nationalism are cultural as well as economical; and the greatest of these is the obvious effort on the part of the Mexican people to think and act as a group, rather than as a disjointed mass of individuals.

Revolutions in Mexico, with the exception of those of Hidalgo and Juárez, had always been the work of one man, or a group of men. The loyalties inspired

have always been loyalties to persons, and not to great principles. Therefore as each succeeding leader has come to power, he has forgotten the ideals which he has proclaimed from the housetops, and has been thoughtful only of those laws which would line his pockets, and minister solely to his own well-being.

But in the new revolution, there has developed a real group consciousness. The labor unions have sprung up, numbering more than a million men. In these there is group discussion, and the minority is learning to abide by the decisions of the majority. An interesting phase of this decline of individualism is seen in the interest taken in athletic sports all over the country. It is all an evidence of the development of the spirit of team play, and is one of the most hopeful signs for the future of the new Mexico.

The New Patriotism. And with this national awakening, there is coming a new idea of patriotism. Always there has been patriotism in Mexico, and much of it; but it has been patriotism of a frothy variety which has served merely as a veneer for personal ambition. There has been much talk about constitution, and liberty and independence, with a repetition of the story of Hidalgo; but it has been talk which spent itself during the fighting, and was speedily forgotten after the various revolutionary leaders have come into power. Always Juan García has been a great man as long as he was needed to carry a musket, or furnish fodder for the cannons; but as soon as the war was over he has been sent back to sweat upon the farm, while the leaders for whom he has risked his life have enjoyed a brief heyday of wealth and power.

It is true that in "*manifestos*" and in "plans" much has been said about the fact that he has been

robbed of his lands; but after the fighting, he has never gotten them back, and his erstwhile leaders have done nothing to get them back. To-day there is a growing realization of the fact that the country can never be happy and prosperous until Juan gets his lands, and leaders of the revolution have set themselves to the task of seeing that he gets them. Any who stand in the way, will probably be hurt.

The New Architecture. In fact, with the development of this social idea of the group, there has come a restatement of values throughout every phase of national life. In architecture, for instance, during the time of Porfirio Díaz, there were importations not only of foreign ideas and foreign plans, but it was thought that even native materials were not good enough for the construction of the best of the great public buildings. The new post-office, than which a finer cannot be found anywhere in the Western Hemisphere, was built almost entirely of iron and marble which was imported from Italy. The National Theatre, the construction of which was interrupted by the tread of Madero's troops, follows European ideas, and the marble slabs which still lie about the unfinished structure, were imported.

What was done in architecture by the Díaz government was slavishly aped by private individuals in their buildings, with the result that Avenida Juárez, the Fifth Avenue of the capital, looks more like a street of Paris than a street of Mexico. Beautiful it may be, but Mexican most certainly it is not. It is Mexico, only when crowds of white, pajama-clad peons, march down its sidewalks in their broad sombreros, as they do upon days of *fiesta*. In order to keep the most important street of the city thoroughly European, a law

was once passed by Congress, forbidding the wearing of white trousers upon this thoroughfare.

The architects of the revolution, however, have forgotten Europe. Instead of thinking that there was nothing good in Mexico, they have come to the conclusion that only in the past of the Indians, can they find fitting inspiration for their work. Even the splendid building of the church fathers is passed over lightly, as the architects of the new school are studying the ruins of Palenque, of Uxmal, of Chichén-Itzá. They are finding that their ancestors never built without first contemplating the relation of the finished building to the contour of the hills, and without considering just what would be the effect upon the landscape. They are studying the contrast between simplicity, and a profusion of adornment, seen in the same building. They are wondering how the peculiar shaped Mayan roof, with the crest, and the ever-present idea of the plumed serpent can be adapted to modern architecture. Profoundly they are influenced by the impression of weight, of thickness, of size; and out of it all, they are developing for Mexico a new type of architecture, which will be peculiarly her own.

The Awakening in National Customs. The same nationalistic spirit is noted also in the customs of the people, in their dances, and in their songs. Time was, when no one who pretended to be anybody would be guilty of singing an Indian ballad. To do so in public was to give evidence of being weak-minded, or of having partaken too freely of *pulque* or *tequila*. To-day, the songs and dances of the Indians are heard not only in the remote villages but also in the homes of the élite in the capital. There are many Mexicans in this country who have not been in the homeland since the rev-

olution began, who do not understand that the songs, the dances, the dress, the customs which they have been taught to think of as cheap, common, vulgar, are to-day the fashion in the best society. Juan García has at last come back into his own.

The New Art. And what else could we expect to find in the field of art? It was Adolfo Best who first discovered that there was something noble in the artistic achievements of the Indians, when all of Mexico had for years been drawing its inspiration from Europe. Called to work in the Secretariat of Education, he substituted the ideas of the Aztecs and the Mayas, for the Greek models which had been taught in the classrooms. Since his time, instead of drawing the forms which have been handed down from classical art, the children in Mexican schools have found a classical period in their own history, and are sketching the pyramids, the ruins of Maya land, and scenes from their daily lives.

What a tremendous drive this new motif may have in the world of art, is attested by the popularity of Diego Rivera. Always he paints the Indians—Indians toiling with massive muscles in the field or in the factory—Indians in the forest—Indians amid the familiar scenes of the home. There is a massiveness, a solidarity about the work of Diego Rivera that reminds one of the pyramids; a force, also, prophetic of the driving power of the revolution in all Latin America.

The New Literature. And what we have found to be true in other phases of life, is true also in the realm of literature. Not so many years ago, any teacher of Mexican literature would find his beginnings at the dawn of the colonial era. He would not attempt to go back of Cortés making the frank con-

fession that there was nothing in the writings of the Mexican Indians which merited attention. To-day, some of the eleven thousand students in the National University go about with Nahuatl grammars under their arms. With an enthusiasm lighted in the fires of the revolution, they are studying the tongue of their fathers, that they may read the fragments of literature which have been left. Some day—and every scholar in Mexico yearns for the day—the key to the Mayan literature will be discovered, and the race which speaks to posterity now only through architecture, shall speak also through the written word.

In Religion. And what about religion? During the summer of 1927, Diego Rivera lectured to the American students attending the summer session of the University upon the beginnings of Mexican art. In his discourse he took occasion to refer to the religious customs of the Aztecs, defending even what he called the "artistic phases" in the offering of human sacrifices.

"What could be more beautiful," he exclaimed, "than that a young man in the vigor of his youth, should give himself to the god rather than to wait until the wasting ravages of disease or of old age should have come upon him?"

Much has been said about the attitude of the government toward religion. Although the organized institution called the Church has come in for a great deal of criticism, it is doubtful whether there has been very much change in the attitude of the people themselves toward religion. When the men who marched in the parade in support of Calles in his fight against the Church, passed the cathedral, they touched their hats as a mark of respect.

Much of the difficulty also lies in the fact that all organized religion in Mexico is foreign. The very essence of Roman Catholicism consists in the allegiance of the Church, of all its servants, and of all its adherents, to the Pope in Rome. Evangelical faiths are also foreign importations. Just now the things which are most popular in Mexico are Mexican institutions, Mexican ways, and Mexican customs. There is a revolt against everything foreign; and Mexicans are protesting against foreign religions, whether they be directed from Rome, or from Fifth Avenue in New York.

The Awakening of the National Soul. And so the soul of Mexico at last is awakening. It is true that the new ideals of the revolution have come to but a comparatively few—a million, perhaps two million who live in the centers of population. Out in the mountains and in the country districts the mass of the people have not yet learned that a better day has dawned.

In the art gallery at Mills College there is a remarkable Madonna by Diego Rivera. The countenance of the mother draws and holds one. It is that of a stolid Indian woman, the face of one who has suffered. There is so much of pain about the lines of the mouth and the eyes, that one lingers, and looks again and again, wishing that he might know something of the experiences which have thus written their story upon her brow. Between her knees her little child, large-eyed, face unmarked by anguish, looks out upon the future unafraid.

Juan, sitting upon the roof of his house, is beginning to catch the first gleams which tell him that the gods in some marvellous and benevolent manner are lighting for him the new fire.

VII

THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE NEW NATIONALISM

BUT the leaders of the new nationalism are not satisfied with dreams. Diego Rivera must change the picture of Juan García asleep under his broad sombrero at the railway station for the day of dreams has passed. The train has come in, and Juan García is upon his way.

Indeed, it is doubtful if any awakened nation, in all history, has made such rapid strides as Mexico during the past two decades.

Because of the appalling waste of human life evident on every hand, it was but natural that attention should be focused immediately upon the problem of public health. The program of course is only in its infancy and has not yet reached far beyond the capital; but the young physicians in charge of the Board of Health show such enterprise and are so thoroughly trained, that their work promises much for the future.

Work with the Children. The infant mortality has always been excessive, that from diphtheria ranging from twenty to twenty-five per thousand, whereas ordinarily diphtheria does not thrive in tropical sections.

A comprehensive program was undertaken to give all school children in the capital the Dick and the Schick tests. The Board, however, had not counted upon the ignorance of the people with which it had to

deal. A panic resulted. Children were instructed by many parents to leave the room as soon as the doctors appeared. Some, because of fear, fainted when the tests were given. Others, in their terror leaped through the windows upon the appearance of the physician. The papers took up the cry, and finally a mass meeting of parents was called in protest. The Board was compelled to modify its program, but it has already succeeded in immunizing many children, and has lowered the death rate from the disease.

Smallpox. Dating from the days of the Spaniards, smallpox has always been a scourge in the land of Juan García. The disease had been unknown to the natives, and as there was no immunity, they died off like flies. The Department of Health claims during the year 1926 to have vaccinated three million people, which represents fully one-fifth of the entire population. Vaccination certificates are required from all who enter the country, and these must be stamped by the Mexican consul in the city from which the immigrant or tourist comes. The rule is strictly enforced at the border, and all who are without certificates, are either vaccinated, or turned back.

In the capital, it is never safe to venture upon the street without a certificate. Protestations, or the showing of arm scars are equally of no avail. Frequently a cordon of soldiers is thrown about a much-frequented market, and the physicians proceed to vaccinate all who cannot produce certificates. On December 12, the day of the Virgin of Guadalupe, the patron saint of Mexico, sick pilgrims journey for miles to the shrine of the Virgin, just outside of the city. They are accustomed to ascend on their knees the stone steps leading to the spot where the Virgin is said to



DOING THE DAY'S MARKETING

have appeared to the faithful Juan Diego. On Guadalupe day in 1926 and 1927 the representatives of the Board of Health appeared with soldiers, and vaccinated all who were toiling up the stairs.

Tuberculosis. Very little headway has been made as yet in the fight against tuberculosis, which annually takes a great toll, and which seems to be on the increase. There are some free dispensaries for children, and in the state of Vera Cruz, a sanitarium to cost one and one-half million pesos is planned for the immediate future.

In its work, the Board of Health seems to have the unlimited backing of the government, is manned by physicians educated in the United States, Vienna, or Berlin, and has the very best of equipment. During the summer of 1927 five physicians from the United States were in the country studying typhoid. At much expense and trouble they carried with them extensive laboratory equipment; and upon reaching the capital city, they were surprised to have placed at their disposal as fine a bacteriological laboratory as could be found in any up-to-date municipality of their own country.

The Scourge of Illiteracy. But of all the dire ills which have followed in the train of the land problem, that of ignorance has been the worst and it has been logical, therefore, that the government should have placed such emphasis upon popular education. To José Vasconcelos goes the credit for the beginnings of the splendid school system which to-day is the outstanding achievement of the new nationalism. He has been ably followed by Dr. Puig Caussaranc, and Dr. Moisés Saenz, the former secretary, and the latter sub-secretary of education.

The emphasis of the government is preëminently upon rural education. Porfirio Díaz cared nothing for the masses; Calles believes that all of the other reforms of the revolutionary government will be ineffective, unless training is brought to the peons in the country. For this reason, the President has asked that a minimum of one thousand new rural schools be established each year. It has been impossible to keep up with this schedule, but in the four years between 1922 and 1926, thirty-five hundred new schools were opened in rural districts.

A Trip in Tlascala. If one is a visitor in Mexico, and really anxious to learn something about the progress which is being made in rural education, it is probable that the Secretariat of Education will be glad to arrange for a personal visit to some of these newer country schools. About thirty-five miles southwest of Mexico City, in the state of Tlascala, there is a district which only within the past year has come in touch with the educational movement in the metropolis. One takes an auto from Mexico City, and follows the historic road toward Puebla. At the little village of San Martín, the automobile is sent back, for horses are awaiting for the trip into the country.

The road dwindles from a town street, paved with cobbles, into a rough country road, and then into a mere bridle path through the farms. Between some of the villages more enterprising than others, the trail has been widened again into a road, upon which creak the two-wheeled carts of the peons. Occasionally a *dulce* vender is met, trudging his way from town to town, with his tray of sweets upon his head. The farther one gets from the auto road, the more inquiring become the glances of the people. Sometimes the

more curious frankly stop the visitor, and after wishing him a very good day, inquire as to his nationality, giving him every opportunity to explain why he is so far from the beaten lanes of travel. In many places the road, which runs between fields of corn or *maguey*, has been travelled for so many years, that it has worn deep into the soil. Here and there in the fields are the adobe houses of the peons, most of them roofed with tile.

A Rural School. At last one reaches the little village of Villa Alta. If the word has gone before of the coming of a stranger, the children are thrilled with the air of expectancy. Most certainly upon his arrival, they will be drawn up in front of the little adobe building, ready to give him a royal welcome. Practically all of the children are full-blooded Indians, and your guide explains that a year ago none of them could speak the Spanish language. Always for the proper welcome of the visitor, there will be a song or two, and a speech, while the black eyes of the youngsters gleam with honest pride in their achievements.

But the most interesting sight of all, is the line of parents, standing at a respectful distance outside the yard, behind the cactus fence. They can neither read nor write. Their childhood was spent in the days of *porfirismo*, but they are studying vicariously with their children, and thrilling over their victories. In a moment the visitor finds himself being presented to a barefoot peon, clothed in white cotton shirt and trousers. He bows low, with his broad-brimmed sombrero in his hand. The amenities are over; the president of the local school board has been met.

The welcome concluded, the children file back into the room, and one is allowed to see them at work.

Then it is that there comes the impression of standing in the presence of a great anachronism. The building is of adobe—a product of the seventeenth century. The furniture is meager in the extreme, but in this building of three centuries ago, the educational theories of the twentieth century are being used. Dr. John Dewey has left his mark upon these remote rural schools, through the influence of his disciple, Dr. Moisés Saenz, and everywhere the children are studying by means of the project method. After all, Mexico has not had the problem of some countries, because her teachers for the most part have had nothing to unlearn. It was just as easy for them to adopt the most modern methods at the very start.

Ixtacuixtla. But the visitor cannot tarry long, for his guide has mapped out a course which includes a number of schools. A few more kilometers, and he finds himself entering the sleepy village of Ixtacuixtla. But whatever may be said for the inhabitants who drowse under the brims of their broad sombreros in the shade of the trees, the little school is by no means a sleepy place. As in Villa Alta, it is housed in an adobe which must have seen three hundred years pass over its roof. The girls are painting pottery. Out in the patio two boys are industriously sawing away on a plank, so interested in their work, that they have hardly enough time to give the visitor a glance. But questioned, they are immediately examples of courtesy, and explain that they are building a little ladder for the hen-house.

One wanders through the three rooms of the school, and sees the projects of the various classes. Here are drawn-work, basketry, preserves; and over in one corner, a group of boys and girls are busily engaged in

making soap. The guide explains in a whisper that all the schools are making soap as a project: "Because," he adds, "we know that if all the children *make* soap, they will *use* soap!"

"Do What Needs to be Done." The first project in many of these thirty-five hundred schools which were established in four years, was that of making the building itself. The teacher is not merely a teacher; he is a missionary to children and parents alike. Upon accepting his commission, he is frankly told that he is to go to his field, and "do whatever needs to be done." If any fund at all is given him for "doing what needs to be done" in the community, it is pitifully small, for the task before the Secretariat is great, and the resources inadequate.

Usually, indeed, the teacher must "live off the community"; and it is here that the project method comes into its own. Is there a requisition for a new room for the school? Let it be built as a project for the adults! Is furniture needed—tables, desks, chairs? Let the class in manual training make them as a project. And so with the care of the school grounds, the building of the beehives, the pigeon roost, yes even the pig pen. Everything can be done as a project of either the children or their fathers. The project method has helped Moisés Saenz marvellously in the stretching of his budget!

Adult Education. And indeed, the fathers and mothers are all going to school, wherever there are schools to receive them. After spending the usual number of hours instructing the children in the day-time, the village teacher is expected to give his nights for the teaching of the adults. Eagerly they come out of the gloom to the schoolhouse, hungry for that

training which was denied them when they were children. For all this service to the community, the teacher receives usually two pesos a day; and in some districts he serves as many as three communities, giving two days a week to each. The idea of taking Saturday off has not yet occurred to Juan García's children.

The Cultural Missions. And it is indeed a service to the community which the teacher renders. Just how the government has been able to find enough teachers in such a short time, who know how to "do what needs to be done" in a community, is a question which immediately suggests itself. As a matter of fact, the Secretariat is developing them, and in doing so is using the same project method. This instruction is furnished the rural teachers through the "cultural missions." The staff of such a mission includes a social worker, with a nurse's training. She gives instruction in first aid, in the care of babies, in hygiene; and usually she takes with her when she visits a village, enough cultures to vaccinate the whole population.

On the staff there is also a director of physical culture, who sets up a handball court, a tennis court, swings and other playground equipment. It is his business to teach the boys baseball, and everybody community singing. Then there is a specialist in home economics, who gives instruction in the canning of fruits, de-hydrating processes, cooking, sewing, etc. The fourth member is a teacher of agriculture, who brings to the new land-owners the best ideas as to seed, use of fertilizers, rotation of crops, and gardening. He is also a veterinary, and gives instruction in husbandry. With the staff also, there is a specialist

in school organization, who shows both teacher and parents how this diversified program of social service is to be coördinated with the academic training in the three R's which is given in the school.

The various states are divided into school districts, each of which is visited during the course of a year by one of these missions. When the mission comes, the rural teachers gather in the village which has been chosen for the institute. In the little town which is thus favored, a model school is set up, and for three weeks, both children and adults go to school. The work of the five experts is carefully coördinated, so that when they leave, the whole program will be built around the school, as a community center. After the mission closes, its members move on to the next district, while the rural teachers return to their fields, and put into practice as much as they can of what they have learned. So keen has been the interest of the people in the work, that when one of the missions visited the state of Oaxaca, which has an illiteracy of eighty-eight per cent., fifty-two Indian chiefs of the state formed themselves into a body-guard, and conducted the experts from district to district.

Normals Also. But it must not be thought that the Secretariat of Education is relying entirely upon this nondescript method of preparing its rural teachers. Small normal schools are being established at strategic points, which are specializing upon this peculiar and highly diversified type of training. Such a school is located at Xocoyucan, in the state of Tlascala. The building is the farmhouse of an old *hacienda*, and the thirty young men and women who compose the student body work at projects which include everything from blacksmithing to pottery and soap making. The prin-

cial of the school states with pride that every student plays at least one musical instrument.

The Death of the "White-collar" Idea. This business of manual training through the project method is one of the most significant things which is going on in Mexico to-day. For four hundred years, education has been an essentially white-collar profession. Only the uneducated could afford to soil their hands, so that honest toil became a disgrace, and a badge of inferiority. This glorification of manual labor, through its vital identification with the scholastic program, has in it the power of saving a race.

The program of education is closely coördinated through the primary and secondary schools, culminating finally in the University, with its professional training, in the capital. The National University has eleven thousand students, a large and highly efficient faculty, and has the proud boast of being the second oldest university in the Western Hemisphere. It was founded in 1532.

Commerce and Industry. It has frequently been claimed that the efforts of the revolutionary government to restore the land to the people have paralyzed industry. The charge is made that the peon has neither the ability nor the initiative to work the land, and that consequently its allotment to him merely withdraws it from production.

Mexico is preëminently an agricultural country; what she exports, she grows. Furthermore, she cannot buy outside, unless she is producing something at home which she can exchange for foreign goods. Consequently, no better refutation of the above charge can be made, than to quote the value of the exports and imports since land reform became effective. In

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1909, the year prior to the revolution, Mexico imported goods to the value of \$170,473,203 (pesos). During the same year, her exports amounted to \$244,322,814. It is interesting to compare these figures with those which represent the business of the country since land reform began:

<i>Year</i>	<i>Imports</i>	<i>Exports</i>
1918.....	\$276,217,464	\$375,568,386
1919.....	273,038,347	393,790,000
1920.....	395,413,004	855,304,995
1921.....	493,161,741	756,823,609
1922.....	308,499,612	643,549,605
1923.....	315,371,605	568,471,114
1924.....	321,371,605	604,712,515
1925.....	390,966,172	682,484,832

Labor Reform. Better conditions among the laboring classes will depend in a large measure of course upon the advance in general prosperity throughout the country, as well as upon popular education. As has so often been pointed out, Mexico has no great middle class of skilled artisans, society being divided between the ninety per cent. who comprise the manual laborers, and the ten per cent. who make up the landed aristocracy, and the governing group. But the revolutionary government is in the hands of the labor group, and as a result of its efforts, conditions among this class are infinitely better than they were during the days of Porfirio Díaz. The task has been that of building an artisan class out of people who for four centuries have existed in practical slavery. In other words, Mexico has been trying to do in a couple of decades what has been accomplished elsewhere as the result of slow evolution.

The right of the laborer to have any voice in the fixing of the price of his toil was emphatically denied during the Díaz régime. Strikes were crushed by

government troops, while men who could free themselves from the unspeakable conditions upon the *haciendas*, crowded into the cities to lower still more the price of common labor.

The "CROM." The most significant movement which has taken place in the labor world is the organization of the *Confederación Regional Obrera Mexicana*, commonly called the "CROM," from the initial letters of its name. The organization claims sometimes a million, and sometimes a million and a half members, depending both upon the official interviewed, and the particular degree of his enthusiasm at the time of the interview.

The railway workers of the country have never united with the CROM, and there is considerable bad blood between the two organizations. The *Confederación of Railway Workers* claims seventy thousand members, and in 1927 carried to a successful conclusion a strike for better wages and better hours, which involved twenty-eight thousand workers. There are other unions of workers also not affiliated with the CROM, such as the union of bakers, and that of milkmen. These unions complain that great favoritism is shown by the government to the CROM; that while they are compelled to assess their members to meet their expenses, the CROM is allowed to dip into the public treasury, through the influence of Louis N. Morones, first secretary of the CROM, founder of the Labor Party, and Secretary of Industry, Commerce and Labor in the Cabinet of President Calles.

A Better Day for the Toiler. Undeniably, the power of the labor movement has resulted in better wages, and shorter hours. In the matter of legislation, there is nothing to be desired, until the economic

conditions of the country and its general prosperity have time to catch up with the extremely idealistic constitution. The Constitution of 1917 provides for the eight-hour day, with seven hours' labor for night work, and limits the amount of overtime to three hours, with double pay. It fixes minimum wages, and provides that foreigners shall not be paid more than Mexicans for the same kind of work. It provides for three months' pay to workers who are discharged without notice, and recognizes the right of the workers to organize and to strike. On *haciendas*, at mines, or where construction camps are maintained, provision is made for public markets, for schools, and for proper housing for workers.

Juan García's Pay. The wages prevailing in Mexico show a decided advance over those of pre-revolutionary days; but it must be borne in mind that the cost of living has also advanced. Common laborers, called "pick and shovel men" receive one peso and seventy-five centavos a day. One peso is the minimum for common labor in the country, although there are plenty of places where the old wage of even twenty-five centavos still prevails. Bus drivers earn from four to five pesos a day, weavers three and one-half pesos, and stenographers from one hundred and fifty to four hundred and fifty a month. Printers get from three to four pesos a day, carpenters from two to three, while linotypers, the best-paid group of all, sometimes earn as much as thirty pesos a day. The minimum wage for the railway track worker is one peso and a half a day. Machinists get sixteen pesos a day, and railway conductors, fifteen.

Such in brief are the achievements of the new nationalism. Considering the deplorable social and

economic conditions which prevailed among the mass of the people, it is indeed a remarkable record. That the revolution is still in process, is an evident fact, for great social and economic changes are not wrought in two decades. Slowly but surely, however, the evidences of a better life are manifesting themselves. The people have more money, they dress better, have more to eat, enjoy more recreation and amusements, while everywhere there is evident the insatiable hunger for education.

There have been two abortive revolutions. The first, which occurred during the presidency of Obregón, was speedily put down because of the support of the new labor party, and because the people have come to look upon the government as their own.

Serrano and Gómez. Fully a year before the elections which were scheduled to take place during the summer of 1928, the political pot began to boil. Three candidates appeared to succeed President Calles; former President Alvaro Obregón, General Francisco Serrano, and General Arnulfo Gómez. The two latter, raising Madero's revolutionary cry of "no reëlection," accused Obregón of trampling underfoot the principles of the constitution, in his effort to exalt himself. Technically, Congress had interpreted the "no re-election" clause to mean that a president could not be his own immediate successor; but the advocates of the candidacies of Serrano and Gómez made the stout claim that this interpretation had been forced through by Calles, because of his own plans for 1932.

With that Mexican penchant for seeing the humor of a situation, the evening paper of Mexico City, *El Gráfico*, came out one day during the summer with a cartoon entitled "Our Next President." In the



MEET THE PRESIDENT OF THE VILLA ALTA SCHOOL BOARD!

foreground was Obregon, and immediately behind him, and peering over his shoulder, Calles; then Obregón, and again Calles, until the procession faded in the dim distance. It was commonly stated in the opposition press, that the forced interpretation of the Constitution merely permitted the Mexican people to exchange a one-headed tyrant for a two-headed one. When Obregón entered the city of Mexico on July 24, he was given the ovation of a conqueror; and immediately his opponents published broadcast "open letters" charging him with coercing the governors of states to use public funds to transport ignorant *campesinos* who would be willing to shout for any one, if it involved a free trip to the city.

The campaign was only a few weeks old, when revolutionary talk began to fill the air. The malcontents who had attempted to stage a religious revolution, flocked to the banners of Serrano and Gómez; and it was openly stated that these two leaders had threatened revolution if Obregón were elected. In his talk at Culiacán, Obregón sharply criticized this, warlike attitude, declaring that the campaign should be a tournament of ideas, rather than of arms. He laughingly said that his opponents seemed to breakfast on dynamite, and pick their teeth with telegraph poles. The bellicose generals countered by charging Obregón with attempting to import arms for his own use, in case of need.

The Call to Arms. Finally, convinced that they had nothing to gain by waiting for the election, Serrano and Gómez joined forces, and took the field in an attempt to overthrow the government, which they charged with complicity with Obregón. Their plans were discovered prematurely, and Serrano was

promptly captured and executed. Gómez took refuge in the state of Vera Cruz, and with an army which fast dwindled by desertions sought to hold the federal troops at bay. Finally, he too was captured, and paid for his attempt with his life. In all, about two hundred officers are said to have stood blindfolded before the accustomed adobe wall, waiting for the command of the officer of the firing squad. The severity of the government has been criticized, and it has been charged that the Calles-Obregón coalition forced its enemies into revolt, that they might remove them from the campaign. That these developments involved treachery on the part of the government seems to be refuted by the confession of Gómez at the time of his execution; and as for the charge of cruelty, it is probable that more Mexican lives were saved than had the revolution been allowed to gain momentum.

Two facts seem to stand out; first, that it is much harder, due to the developing solidarity of the people, to stage a successful revolution in Mexico; and second, that the government is still a military government. The man who has the army behind him, will be elected president.

¿Quién Sabe? With it all, there is much uncertainty for the future. The growing spirit of solidarity in the nation seems slowly to be evolving political parties, which are dividing along different lines of cleavage from those which have prevailed in the past. There are stout advocates of the principles of the revolution, and there are those who see in it but another wave in the tempest of Mexico's trouble.

A professor from one of our American Universities lectured during the summer session of 1927 at the

National University. He showed himself to be extremely sympathetic to the principles of the revolution, and the next day, one of the papers commenting upon his address had this to say:

"Dr. ——— announced yesterday that he is a friend of the revolution, and that he had explained it in London, in Paris, in Berlin, and in Buenos Aires. If he would only be so kind as to explain it to us here in Mexico, we should be in his eternal debt."

The peon on the farm, the vendor in the town market place, the soldiers in the barracks, the teacher in the schoolroom, the public official—all shrug their shoulders when asked as to the future, and say, "*¿Quién sabe?*"

Will the present leaders repeat the sad story of Mexico's revolutions, and forget their promises? Will they exploit the people as have so many of their predecessors, for their personal gain?

Must Juan García again shoulder a musket to fight for some one whose interest in him is only a banner of false promises?

Will Mexico's splendid program of rural education move too rapidly; will mental rehabilitation outstrip moral reconstruction?

Will there be another revolution—a successful one?

Will the Church succeed in her effort to overthrow the government?

¿Quién sabe?

VIII

JUAN GARCIA MOVES NORTH

WHEN the shackles of debt were first stricken from his limbs, Juan García rubbed his eyes in his native home. He was a free man. No longer could he be held to the *hacienda* where his father and his father's father had worked. He could go where he pleased.

Filtering in from the north there came remarkable stories about unheard-of wages in the United States. It was said that a man could earn two pesos and sixty centavos a day, with a house for the family, and wood and water free. And what was even stranger, it was whispered that the American peso was more than twice as large as the Mexican peso. Bah! These of course were many of them fairy tales. But there was no work for a free man in Mexico, so why not go to the United States?

Crossing the Line. At Ciudad Juárez, Juan was crowded with many others into a close room. He was compelled to answer long questions, many of which he could not understand. But after all, the examination was not very severe. The world was on fire with the Great War, and the gringos needed men to pick cotton, to dig copper, and to keep the railroad tracks in repair.

Finally Mr. García was given a bath, while his clothes were taken from him, and roasted in an oven. When they were returned, he found his leather belt had been burned to a crisp.

He crossed the bridge, and paused for a moment in the crowd, to look off up the long street, paved with concrete. The buildings rose above him to dizzy heights. Surely he had come to the land of marvels, where everything was big. Perhaps after all, that American peso ——

His meditations were interrupted by a pleasant-faced gringo speaking Spanish, who offered to find him a job. Also he was to come with an auto, and haul Mr. García and his few belongings to the place where he was to live. It would all cost ten dollars, and he was to meet him at three-thirty on a certain corner. Mr. García cheerfully paid the money, and thanked his lucky saint that he had so soon found employment. But he waited until long after five o'clock upon the appointed corner, when at last some one came along and taught him a new word, or at least an old word with a new meaning. It was "*cayote*."

Finally Juan wandered into a labor agent's office, and was given work in the cotton. For miles through the dark and the daylight, he rode in a big truck, crowded with men, women, and children. Out in a little desert town they had to stop for a couple of hours, while one of the women gave birth to a child. Then on and on, ever north where the white fields awaited him.

Unrest in Mexico. And so Juan García has moved from the land of his birth, and has become a part of the social and economic life of the United States. And with him have come hundreds of thousands of his countrymen.

The revolution freed the Mexican serfs; but with their freedom came a paralysis of agriculture. For years marauding bands swept back and forth over the

land. Revolution was followed by counter-revolution. A nation of slaves had suddenly tasted of liberty, and had become drunken. Bandit chieftains who talked importantly about liberty, independence and the constitution swept down upon feeding herds and ripening crops. There was no profit in producing a harvest which must be exchanged perforce for a worthless scrap of paper. Furthermore, the land question was only in the initial stages of solution, and the labor resources of the country were unorganized. So the Juan Garcías in a thousand villages found themselves without bread, and the same urge for self-preservation which had caused them to rise in arms, drove them northward into the land of plenty.

The Demands of the War. By this time the war had already begun in Europe, and the horde of hungry men sweeping up from the south was welcomed gladly. The demand for munitions and for war materials had signalled a new era in the industrial life of the United States. The humming factories, the copper mines striving desperately to keep pace with the screaming shells, the transportation systems, strained to the breaking point, were all calling loudly for more and more laborers, and were offering wages which to a generation unaccustomed to war-time conditions seemed fabulous. During all this time Mexican politics may have been pro-German, but nobody has ever stopped to figure out the contribution which Mexican labor made toward the winning of the war.

The New Industrial Era. The armistice signed, attention was turned to those industries which had been allowed to lag. There was found to be a shortage of housing. The rebuilding of Europe created a demand for steel, which in turn stimulated all allied

industries. In the new industrial era which began to dawn, there was a growing disposition to let the foreigner do all the manual labor, with the result that the immigration from Mexico continued unabated.

Waters in the Desert. New desert areas also were rapidly being brought under cultivation. The Roosevelt Dam in Arizona, and the Elephant Butte in New Mexico made gardens out of thousands of acres of land which had formerly grown only mesquite and sage brush. It was found that in the Salt River valley of Arizona long-staple cotton could be grown superior to that produced in Egypt. The great automobile tire companies immediately interested themselves in vast holdings of land, and the crops which were planted required an army of pickers. In the same way the rapid development of the Imperial and the San Joaquin Valleys in California, as producers of garden truck and grapes, placed the various agricultural regions of the southwest in the position of bidding for the brawn and muscle of Juan García and his friends.

Mexicans and Beets. Then came the rapid development of the sugar beet industry. First Colorado, then Utah, Idaho, Wyoming and Montana turned their agricultural areas over to the production of sugar. The acreage given to beets in Colorado jumped from 150,000 in 1924, to a quarter of a million two years later, and the beet growers like the cotton, the grape and the orange men have turned to Mexico for their labor supply. Ohio, Kansas and Michigan followed suit, sending their labor agents into all the large cities of Texas to import men, women and children to weed and thin the growing crops. And as fast as Texas gave up her laborers in the face of the demands made

by higher wages farther north, the vacuum was immediately filled by new immigrations from Mexico.

The Effect of the Quota. On July first, 1924, the quota law became effective for the nationals of all countries except those of the Western Hemisphere. A labor shortage was created throughout the country, and almost immediately, negroes from the southeast and Mexicans from the southwest began to pour north and east to supply the demand. As far east as Norfolk and Pittsburgh, and as far north as Detroit and Gary, Mexicans are found doing the work of industry which was formerly done by the Poles, the Slovaks and the Italians.

Mexico Moving North. If we were to get up some morning and read in the paper that all the inhabitants of the states of Lower California, Sonora, Coahuila, Chihuahua and Nuevo León had suddenly abandoned their homes, and had moved northward in a body to the United States, we would be convinced that something important had happened. These states indeed have not been depopulated, but a population greater than that living in these border states has during the past seventeen years come to take up their abode in this country.

One travels through the southwest and sees that practically every pick and shovel man is a Juan García. He goes into the cities and towns, and finds that each has a Mexican district where are housed the hewers of wood and the drawers of water in this new industrial age. He visits border towns which are almost entirely Mexican, and finds that in the Big Bend country east of El Paso, practically nine out of ten of all the people whom he meets are immigrants from the south. And with this constant impression

of black eyes and swarthy skins, he is convinced of the fact that he is standing in the presence of one of the greatest racial movements in all history.

Population statistics in Mexico before the days of '48 are indeed scanty; but without exaggeration it can be said that there are fifty times as many Mexicans in the territory which we won from Mexico, as lived there when it was still Mexican soil. Indeed for the past decade and a half, Mexico has been pushing the line farther and farther north. We talk about the capitalistic penetration of Mexico, but Mexico herself has accomplished a labor penetration of the United States which is no less noteworthy. It will help us better to understand this movement, when we realize that at least one-eighth of all of Mexico's population lives to-day under the stars and stripes. But even such an estimate is misleading, because so large a part of the population of Mexico is Indian, speaking native dialects, and as yet has had no part in the surge of the nationalistic movement. Dismissing this large group from our calculation, we may safely estimate that one-fifth of all Spanish-speaking Mexicans are now living in this country.

Page the Census-Taker. At this point, the census-taker should be called in. Let him be lively, alert, fluent in Spanish, and at a glance able to tell Juan García from José López. Furthermore, he should have worked out the technique of counting some hundreds of thousands of movable Mexicans, whose only address is a dust-smirched tent, or a rattling Ford.

Unfortunately, because no such census-taker has ever yet qualified for the job, there is a great difference of opinion as to the exact number of people from our neighbor country who have favored us with their pres-

ence during the past two decades. Uncle Sam is able as always to furnish us with the information as to how many Mexicans have regularly entered the country, but he himself frankly confesses that his agents are not keen enough to catch all those who enter illegally. The government statistics, however, are as follows:

MEXICAN IMMIGRATION AND EMIGRATION

<i>Year</i>	<i>Immigration</i>	<i>Emigration</i>
1910.....	17,760	
1911.....	18,784	
1912.....	22,001	
1913.....	10,954	
1914.....	13,089	
1915.....	10,993	
1916.....	17,198	
1917.....	16,438	
1918.....	17,602	25,048
1919.....	28,844	17,793
1920.....	51,042	6,412
1921.....	29,603	5,519
1922.....	18,246	5,770
1923	62,709	2,479
1924	87,648	1,878
1925.....	32,378	2,875
1926	42,638	2,158
1927.....	66,766	2,774

"Bootleg" Mexicans. But as every one knows, a large part of the Mexican immigrants in this country forgot all about the boundary line when they crossed. Since the quota law was applied to Europeans, a visé fee of ten dollars has been charged every Mexican over sixteen, and a head tax of eight dollars has been levied, regardless of age. This furnishes Juan García with a decidedly strong economic reason why he should wade the Rio Grande at night, or cross somewhere in Arizona or New Mexico where the line is unguarded. As a result the number who enter illegally each year is far in excess of those who make their bow to the

officers on duty at the various ports of entry. So great is the seasonal labor demand in the state of California that it is estimated seventy-five per cent. of the Mexicans enter without paying the visé and head tax.

In the spring of 1926 the immigration officials in the Imperial Valley entered into an agreement with the employers of labor whereby "bootleg" Mexicans were to be given an opportunity to legalize their residence by paying in installments the amounts due. Notices were posted advising of the danger of deportation, and offering the advantages of the plan, and in less than one month over 3,000 Mexicans had taken the steps thus to legalize their residence.¹ In an address in New York in 1926 Commissioner of Immigration Hull estimated that there were about half a million Mexicans in the United States who did not know anything about the boundary line.

Where Are They? Every city and town has its own figures; but every city and town furnishes those figures through the inspiration of the Chamber of Commerce, and it is noted that most organizations which are interested in the growth and prosperity of the community are inclined to overestimate the proportion of native-born Americans while minimizing the number of Mexicans.

School statistics furnish a guide, for the census Bureau at Washington has found that the school enrollment in an average community normally represents seventeen per cent. of the total population. But the element of uncertainty enters again when we reflect that so many Mexican children escape the school laws,

¹ Report of Commission on International and Interracial Factors in the Problem of Mexicans in the United States. El Paso Congress, Dec., 1926, p. 8.

and that there exists a large number of "solos" in the country or men who have left their families in Mexico, while they have come to seek jobs. The presence of this "solo" class is revealed by the fact that of the 66,766 Mexicans entering during the fiscal year which ended June 30, 1927, 62.1% were adults, and of these adults, three-fourths were males.

Using the population figures available but making no allowance for the disturbing factors above mentioned, we find that the five southwestern states have Mexican populations as follows: Arizona, 60,000; California, 350,000; Colorado, 70,000; New Mexico, 180,000; Texas, 550,000 (many Texas people say three-quarters of a million). There are a quarter million Spanish-speaking people in New York City, many of them Mexicans. Michigan, Nebraska, West Virginia and Pennsylvania each have five thousand. No figures are available for Ohio, Wyoming, nor Idaho where the beet sugar industry annually imports large numbers for the states west and south of Chicago where they are employed upon the railroads.

Uncertainty clouds the whole subject. For example the Mexican population in the state of Illinois has been estimated at 15,000; but a speaker at the Commonwealth Club in San Francisco recently declared that Chicago alone has 175,000! Guided in all this by the utmost conservatism, we are convinced that there are not less than one million and a half of Mexicans, or people of Mexican parentage who have come to live in the United States. An estimate of a million and three-quarters would only take into account the communities where Mexicans are known to be working, but for which no figures are available, while an estimate of two million could well be defended. This

depletion of the labor supply of the country has not gone unnoticed by Mexico, and a vigorous campaign has been undertaken to dissuade people from entering the United States. Before the war, the population of Mexico was given as over 15,000,000; many authorities now place it as low as 14,000,000.

What of the Future? Contemplating this tide of Mexican labor, with the social and economic problems which it presents, there are those who solace themselves with the idea that it is but temporary, and that Juan García will soon return to his home land. They compare the government statistics of emigration with those of immigration, and are consoled, forgetting that there is no reason why a Mexican should not emigrate legally, but strong reasons why he should immigrate illegally.

A personal knowledge of hundreds of Mexican cases convinces one that these people do not in large numbers return to Mexico; and of those who do return most are soon convinced of the superior opportunities for labor in the United States, and within six months or a year are again found moving north. Said one who was questioned if he was ever going back: "Mexico is indeed my '*patria*.' I love her; but my children want to stay here, and I shall remain with them." An American expressing surprise on meeting a Mexican who had six months before bidden him farewell as he turned his face to the homeland, was informed laconically: "If you are out of work in this country, somebody feeds you; if you are out of work in Mexico, nobody cares."

It will take a generation for Mexico to set her economic house in order, and by that time, the roots of the Mexican colonies in this country will be deep in

our social and economic soil. We might therefore just as well content ourselves with the conviction that what was once part of Mexico is now part of America.

The Problem of that Mexican. "That Mexican" whom we have so long contemplated from north of the Rio Grande, has therefore come to live with us. With his inherited ignorance, his superstition, his habits of poor housing, his weakness to some diseases, and his resistance to others, with his abiding love of beauty, he has come to pour his blood into the veins of our national life. "That Mexican" no longer lives in Mexico; he lives also in the United States. The "Mexican problem" therefore is no longer one of politics; it is one of people. It reaches from Gopher Prairie to Guatemala.

Too long we have asked ourselves what Mexico was going to do about the problem of Mexican ignorance and lack of initiative. Now we can begin to ask what Mexico and the United States can do about "that Mexican."

And at last we have found a common denominator!

IX

MR. GARCIA, PLEASE SIT DOWN!

I SAW him first in this country, toiling upon a section gang in Arizona. Our train was delayed, and we had halted just at evening where a bit of double track was building. With a pair of Gargantuan tongs, Mr. García was lifting at the end of a rail. A signal, a swing, and nine hundred pounds of steel clanged into place.

At a word from the foreman, there was a sudden straightening of broad backs. Tools were hastily gathered together. It was quitting time, and as we were promised a wait of a couple of hours, I shamelessly followed Mr. García along the track. Two hundred yards, and we came to his home—a dilapidated red box car upon a side track. But it was indeed a home, for hardly had Mr. García come into view, when four tangle-haired, black-eyed children precipitated themselves down the steep ladder that led from the car to the ground. Rushing along the track, they hurtled into Mr. García's arms. They hung upon his hands, battling for place, and before he reached the car, a small child was riding each heavy work shoe, as he clumped up the path. In the door, waving a greeting, stood Mrs. García with a baby in her arms.

The whole family disappeared, while I studied the home. The wood cried out for paint, but the windows were clean. Through them I caught a glimpse of bright geraniums. From one corner of the car, to a tie

propped up with rocks, ran a line full of washing. Not far from the little ladder was a blackened wash-tub, upon the embers of a dead fire. A pile of discarded railroad ties awaited Mr. García's spare time to be converted into fuel.

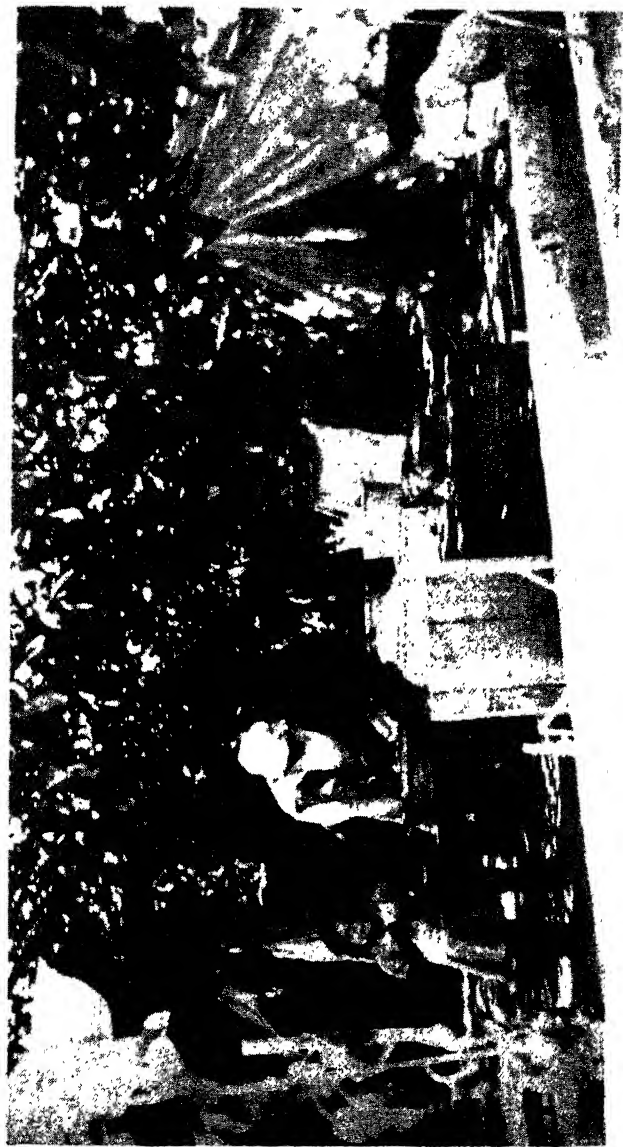
Boldly I climbed the steep ladder, and knocked at the side of the door. Instantly, Mr. and Mrs. García arose from their evening *frijoles*. A chair was placed before me, and they exclaimed in unison, "*siéntese!*" I was introduced to the family, and each child with adult gravity came forward to shake hands.

Mr. García had worked on street construction in El Paso; once, before the baby was born, the whole family had picked cotton near Phoenix. But now he was very glad to have steady work with the railroad company.

Suddenly the engine snorted. I hurried up the track, and as I turned to look again at Mr. García's home, I saw the children playing about the trucks of the car. It was a house whose foundation was wheels!

The Pied Piper. Months later, I was driving through the Imperial Valley in California. It was early morning, and the chill of the night was fleeing before the sun that climbed up behind the gnarled face of the desert mountains. Emerald fields of winter lettuce bordered the road. Whirling along, I caught a glimpse of a man paddling with bare feet across the field. I stopped to watch him. He was the Pied Piper of the valley. His hoe was his fife, and the murky waters of the Colorado ran laughing after him between the rows.

Soon he was near the fence, and I recognized the patient face and the black mustache of Mr. García of the section gang. He leaned upon his hoe, while the



IN A CAMP OF MIGRATORY WALNUT PICKERS CALIFORNIA

waters ran wild. Yes, the job with the railroad had been good, but there had been a chance for all the family again to work in the cotton. Then the lettuce; and now—great privilege—the children were in school! With his hoe he pointed to a group of white tents dust-smirched, from which slender columns of smoke climbed to the sky. In one of those tents Mrs. García made a home, while she cooked *frijoles* and *tortillas* for her lord.

The Beet Family. Almost a year later, I chanced to be in the sugar beet section of northern Colorado. The "campaign" was on, and plows had turned the beets like great white rocks, out of the damp soil. A phalanx of men topped across the field. With their long knives they stabbed the beets, lifted them to the left hand, struck the tops, and dropped the beets behind them in windrows. It was a rhythmic motion, monotonous, interminable—"ka-pa-cha, ka-pa-cha!" Trucks coming behind hauled the beets to open cars, which hummed away over the tracks to the factories.

I called one afternoon at a two-room adobe hut. Over a fire simmered a blackened tub—had I ever seen it before?—and in the tub a woman poked clothes with a faded stick. I introduced myself, and began asking questions. Instantly I was met with an expansive grin of recognition. It was my old friend, Mrs. García.

Immediately she sent little Juan to the house for a grocery box, and with her apron she carefully dusted it and bade me sit down.

It seemed the "campaign" would soon be over, and then "*quién sabe?*" what the next work would be. The children had helped. In the early summer they had thinned and weeded the young plants, and with the

lull in the work there had been six weeks of school in late July, and in August. But winter was coming, and people said there would be much snow in Colorado!

Always since then, it seemed to the Garcías as if they had been on the move. Whenever Mr. García found employment, he worked with one eye upon the job he had, and the other upon the job he hoped to have. With the first opportunity to better wages or living conditions, he had moved, until moving had become the fixed habit of his life. He has acquired the habit of living on wheels.

The Industries Demand Migratory Labor. There are certain economic conditions which demand that Mr. García and all his kind be migrants. Especially is this true in the state of California, where the chief industry is agriculture, of a highly specialized type. While other states count upon one, or at the most two crops a year, there is never a month in California when some crop is not rolling to market. Dr. George P. Clements, Manager of the Agricultural Department of Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce, has made an extensive study of casual labor in the state of California, and he has pointed out that the more highly specialized the agriculture of any section becomes, the greater is the demand for seasonal labor. He states that the Mexican immigrant, "if he only knew it, has California agriculture and industry in the hollow of his hand."

California Casuals. It would be possible indeed, to plot the curve of the peregrinations of Mr. García and his friends, in search of work in the state of California. Like a tumbleweed which the wind of economic adversity has lifted from its root, he goes hither and yon, ready to pack and move at the slightest call. In Jan-

uary and February, he is helping to harvest the navel orange crop. March finds him in Ventura or Santa Barbara counties, working in the beans, or thinning sugar beets. Early in May he drifts down into the Imperial Valley, to work in the cantaloupe harvest, or into the lower San Joaquin Valley to gather apricots, or other early fruits. This work keeps him busy through June, when at the beginning of July, his service is in demand all over the state. Competing crops bid for his help, until September and October, when he finds work in the walnut groves; or in picking cotton. Late in November, and in December, he drifts back to the place where he started, and is busy picking navel oranges again.

It requires 64,394 cars to transport the California grape crop to market, and practically all of the harvesting is done by the hands of Mr. García and his friends. It is estimated that it takes the labor of fifteen men for a day to produce a carload of grapes, or a total of 1,095,000 man-days to bring the grape crop to market. Brawley, situated at the neck of that bottle which is the Imperial Valley, sees from 10,000 to 12,000 cars of cantaloupes roll through her railroad yards during the short two-month season each year. Deciduous fruits are gathered over the state from April 15 to November 15, and fill 25,000 cars. Oranges and lemons while having a peak of production, are handled practically all the year, and in 1926 filled a total of 78,626 cars. Lettuce in the Imperial Valley fills 10,000 cars, while all perishables together in California use 240,000 cars, with the bulk of the labor done by Mexicans. These crops must be gotten to market each at its own time, so that the demand for casual labor is sharp and insistent during the harvest, and disappears

entirely in each particular section, as soon as the crop has been gathered.

When the work in one section is finished, Mr. García tumbles his dishes, his mattresses, his kettles and his pots and his children into a decrepit Ford car, spins the crank of the machine, and the next day, is three hundred miles away calmly asking for work upon the harvesting of another crop. It is estimated that casual labor in California is idle for 34.70 per cent. of its time. This would probably present an intolerable situation, were it not for the fact that casuals spend this time in hunting for work. It is not fair to Mr. García that he should spend a large share of what he has earned on one job, in travelling to find another.

In the Beet Fields. For the work in the sugar beets of Colorado, the labor is recruited in Texas. Many of these are "wetbacks" or those who have crossed the line illegally, and many regularly make the trip north to the beet area, returning south for the winter. The sugar company furnishes the transportation, and the Mexicans after being recruited for the work, are assembled at a point of embarkation by the labor agent. They are then loaded into the cars, a certain amount of personal belongings and household goods, and sometimes even furniture, being allowed each family. This heterogeneous mass of pots and kettles and quilts and comforters are segregated in cars, according to the districts to which their owners are destined, and are switched off the trains on sidings at convenient places. Arriving at the proper destinations, the hands are met at the stations by the growers who have contracted for their services, and are taken with their belongings to the shacks or houses which are prepared for them.

When Juan García moves out with his little family

upon the beet field, he is in a certain sense working for himself, for he has contracted with his employer to do all the handwork on a certain number of acres, at so much per acre. The work consists in thinning the young plants, in weeding them as often as they may require, and in harvesting and topping the beets in the fall. It is in thinning that the children are especially proficient.

Down in Dixie. While the beet worker finds his way from Texas cities to the beet fields of Colorado in the train, he journeys to the cotton sections of his own state in a broken-down Ford. As one dealer in second-hand automobiles in a city of Texas remarked, "If it were not for these damned Mexicans, we would not be able to sell our junk." Anything that has four wheels, and can cough and spit along the road, is loaded to the guards with family possessions, and then piled high with Mexican children.

One passes them along the road patching a tire which has long outlived its usefulness, or trying to coax life back into an ignition system which leaks at a dozen places. Sometimes they may be observed parked on the main street of a town en route, while the mother provides luncheon for a dozen hungry mouths. She can be seen using the running board for a bread board, cutting the bread into huge slices, smearing it over with delectable jam, and passing it up to the eagerly outstretched hands of the children atop the mattresses and the bedding. The destination of these cotton pickers as they journey northward from San Antonio is often determined definitely by the longevity of the car in which they travel. Where the car breaks down, there the family sits down; and there they earn enough money to buy another wreck which will take

them back to San Antonio, or to provide the first payment of rent on a little house where they plan to spend the winter.

On the Railroads. It might be thought that if Mr. García were not at heart a rover, and really wanted a job, the railroads would furnish him with constant employment. Even in this type of labor, however, the casual system is in vogue. Periods of extensive track work come at certain seasons of the year; pick and shovel men are employed to meet a temporary need, and as soon as the work is finished, they are set adrift. It must be remembered that in any industry, the hand worker, the pick and shovel man, is the easiest hired, and the quickest fired. The Santa Fé Railroad, which may be taken as fairly representative, and which employs a total of 14,300 Mexicans on all its lines, has a turnover of 300% each year among its track laborers.

The Economic Woe of the Garcías. The system of the "house on wheels" may indeed be the best arrangement which has yet been worked out to turn the wheels of industry, but it is economically disastrous to Mr. García, and it is socially unwholesome to the community or communities in which he lives.

Any type of labor which does not evenly space the Mexican's earnings over the year, is bound to result in hunger and want during the periods of unemployment. No matter what may be the income during the season of work, it will all be gone two weeks after that employment ceases. When the money is coming in Mr. García is a millionaire even though his way of living may make him a pauper to-morrow. His centuries of dependence have taught him that no cloud is without a lining of real silver, which can readily be coined into money.

Here functions again, his lottery mind. Last year, he ponders, when the beet harvest was over, he went to Denver, and shivered through the five months of idleness. Only through the help of the Associated Charities were the children fed and clothed. But this year it will be different. Why worry? And so the money which should carry Mr. García and his family through the winter, is spent for a phonograph, silk shirts, or for a gilt-framed enlargement of some dear departed. The best sort of work for the García family is work which keeps him busy all the year, and which spaces his remuneration evenly over fifty-two weeks.

The migratory type of labor is economically disastrous also, because it does not permit the laborer to get ahead. It offers little recognition for initiative, and furnishes few rewards for industry. It is a type of employment which has in itself shackles and bonds, and ties Mr. García to the stake of industry almost as much as did the debt system upon the *hacienda* of his native land.

Social Ills. If the casual system of labor makes it impossible for Mr. García to earn well, quite as truly does it make it impossible for him to spend well. He is known in the community as a bird of passage; no merchant need curry his favor, because his goodwill is not worth anything. He is in the community, but never of it; and frequently, because of that fact, is outrageously exploited. In many places the iniquitous "company store" appears, with all of the practices which are peculiar to it.

But though the community be unmoved by the contemplation of Mr. García's economic woe, it certainly ought not to be careless to the social ills involved.

No considerable group of people can be anything short of a peril to the commonwealth in which they live, unless they settle down and develop homes. A home, however, with all that it means, the prevalent system of casual labor for Mexicans renders impossible. There are some families which make an attempt to own property, and establish a home in the place where they have the longest continuous employment, but it is a pitiable attempt at the best. Furthermore, the "tramp" habit is easy to acquire, and hard to overcome. Ninety per cent. of the migratory Mexican laborers of California are said to own automobiles, and the roving nature which we all share is accentuated in the case of these people by their constant search for work.

The Mexican industrial worker is recruited from the agricultural group, usually by means of temporary employment which he gains during a dull period in the city, and which he is loath to leave when the next crop comes around. If a man, however, does not have it in him to find and keep a settled job, a few years of "following the crops" soon make him a dependent, and a charge upon the community either as an indigent or a criminal. It is a significant fact, that the bulk of the load of Mexican charity cases in Los Angeles, which has the largest Mexican population of any American city, is for families which have been in this country over ten years. Quite as significant is the further fact that the agricultural industries are yearly calling for more and more new immigrants—a number far out of proportion to the increase in the crops. These new recruits are needed to make up the defections of those who graduate year by year, either into industry, or into the ranks of the professionally poor.

Hard on the School Children. Furthermore, Mr. García's mobility is hampering the state in the education of his children. Said the fifteen-year-old son of a migrant who was in the third grade, "Dad always moves before it is time to go into the fourth grade." In many communities of the southwest the truant officer catches up with a Mexican family only when the next crop is calling; and frequently the economic urge of the industry involved is so acute, that society merely winks at the violation of the law. The condition would not be tolerated for American children; but these migrants "are just Mexicans" or "they'll be moving soon, anyway."

Parents, also, who are themselves uneducated illy coöperate with school authorities. There is a California law which prohibits the employment of children under twelve years of age; but what boots the law when growers want the cotton picked, and Mr. García needs the money? In days gone by, when the truant officer approached, a whistle sounded; this was the signal for the children to duck down between the rows of cotton until the danger was over. To-day a compromise is effected, whereby they go to school as soon as their parents go to the field. Shortly after noon, a full day's session has been completed, when the boys and girls are free to go into the cotton.

But in spite of compulsory education laws in all of the states where the Mexicans live and work, there are literally thousands of Mexican children in this country who do not go to school, or who go to so many schools that they cannot make satisfactory progress. In a study made in Colorado by the National Child Labor Committee it was found that there were 1,341 children of compulsory school age belonging to con-

tract families, who lost an average of 33 out of 58.7 school days. Retardation showed a tendency to increase with each succeeding year, until the highest percentage was reached in the fourth season.

There seems to be a feeling prevalent in most mixed communities of the southwest, that because "that Mexican" is a migrant, the responsibility for him and his children rests in no degree whatsoever upon the community where he may chance to be for the moment. As one school superintendent of a Colorado city is reported as saying: "These Mexicans are here only for the beet season anyway, so we cannot be expected to waste any effort in getting them into school." In a city in the San Joaquin Valley, California, of 12,000 population, a teacher in a school where there are Mexican children, reported a Mexican turnover of forty per cent. every month during the school year.

The Church and the Settlement. Quite as fleeting is the impression which can be made upon the movable Mr. García and his family, by such community agencies as the Church and Settlement House. Young Juan no sooner makes a beginning in a Sunday-school, or has joined a club, when Mr. García has finished the work in that particular locality, and is moving on to another crop. Mrs. García also becomes interested in the Mothers' Club, when the call comes to pack, and move on. One church discovered that in a Sunday-school which averaged an attendance of about seventy-five, there were 642 different names upon the roll during the course of the year.

Obviously, if we as Americans are interested in the post-war idea of "Americanization," our system of casual labor is the very worst that could be designed to accomplish such a result.

The-Modern Atlas. As a matter of fact, Mr. Juan García is making a real contribution to our prosperity. He does practically all of the common labor in the southwest, and as the quota tightens up the labor market in the north and east, his services are coming to be demanded more and more in these quarters. Every industry in which he toils is a basilar industry; through his brown hands flow the steady streams of gold and silver that fill our coffers. He works to produce food-stuffs, by which men live, and on transportation systems, by which those food-stuffs are brought to the mouths of consumers. The laborer always stands at the fountainhead of production. Indeed, Mr. García is the Atlas who holds upon his broad shoulders our industrial world. And because his contribution to our prosperity is so significant, he has a right to demand that industry organize so as to make it possible for him to maintain a home in a single place for twelve months during the year.

What Is Being Done About It? To point to such perils, is not to say that the great employers of casual labor are not making an effort to solve the problems involved. The Great Western Sugar Company is providing two-room adobe houses, similar to those to which the Mexican is accustomed in his native land. Sometimes the company builds the house, and sells it on slow payments to the laborer; sometimes the land is sold on time, and the materials are furnished the owner on the same liberal terms.

But, more than this, the sugar company feels that too much expense is involved each year in recruiting new labor, and that too much loss is incurred in teaching it to do the work. In order to encourage efficiency, the company gives a gold medal carrying the

image of a beet to the family doing the best work in each district.

Similar plans have been adopted by the Southern California Fruit Growers' Association, model homes having been provided in a number of communities, in the effort to stabilize the laborers, and thus to lessen the annual turnover.

Convert García! Housing alone, will not solve the problem. Mr. García moves from place to place, not because he cannot find a house in which to live, but because he has no money with which to buy food for himself and his children; and at this point all employers have up to the present failed.

It is exceedingly probable that no great industry is better organized than that of the Southern California Fruit Growers' Association. Where to buy to the best advantage its fertilizer, its smudge pots, its oil, the chemicals for fumigation, in fact all its raw products, are solved problems. It knows when to market its wares, and when to hold them. It understands how to care for all its by-products, except the by-product of its labor.

Some progress has been made along this line in the Salt River Valley of Arizona. Due to the low price of cotton, much of the acreage which formerly went into this crop is now being used for lettuce. This has provided a "companion industry" for the cotton, and has furnished employment for the Mexicans when the cotton harvest is over. With the same end in view cotton is being planted in the San Joaquin Valley of California, with the idea of holding the Mexicans in the valley after the grape season is over. But the problem awaits some entrepreneur who will teach the great industries how to budget their labor demands, coördinating crops

in various districts, so that the Mexican can maintain a home in a single community.

While some one is pondering this riddle, let us try to convert Mr. García himself. Let us persuade him to sell his car, and make the first payment upon a home. And let us teach him that, economically, a good job half a year with a poor job between seasons is better than moving from place to place.

My mind goes back to the day I first met him in his house on wheels. I remember the native courtesy with which he passed to me his chair when I came to the door of his box car. I think of him as a visitor in our commonwealth, and I want to say: "Mr. García, please sit down!"

X

THE COST OF CHEAP LABOR

MR. GARCIA is a pawn upon our industrial chess board. The industries which recruit him want him because of his mobility, and because his labor is "cheap."

The Economic Cost. Economists, however, are convinced that "cheap" labor is the most expensive sort, because it decreases the standard of efficiency, and thus slows up production. But there is another economic liability charge which the employer is prone to overlook.

Partial and incomplete statistics show that Mexican casuists participate in the budgets of relief organizations, to a degree far out of proportion to their share in the total population of the communities where they live. Always Juan García has been a poor man; never has he known what it means to have something laid by for a rainy day.

Mexicans number about one-tenth of the total population of the city of Los Angeles, but all philanthropic agencies report that they share in relief budgets to the extent of from thirty to fifty per cent. In Los Angeles County, a little short of thirty per cent. of all cases cared for by the Outdoor Relief Division are Mexican, while the Bureau of Catholic Charities of the city finds that fifty-five and two-thirds per cent. of its funds are absorbed by these visitors. In Austin, Texas, where the Mexicans make up less than six per cent. of the population, seventeen per cent. of all charity cases are

from this group. In Detroit, Michigan, over a period of three years, one Mexican out of every eight has been given relief through the Public Welfare Bureau. The County Commissioner of Weld County, in Colorado, reports that \$15,000 was spent in a single year for the relief of beet workers who were left stranded after the "campaign" was over.

Just how "cheap" is labor which has to be fed out of the public purse during the periods of unemployment? And for whom is it cheap? Put in another way, if a great industry brings foreigners to this country, and pays them insufficient wages to tide them over the period of unemployment, making it necessary for them to be fed out of the public purse, how large a subsidy is society paying into the coffers of that industry?

But after the statisticians and the economists are through with the problem, there still remains much to be said. What of the social cost of "cheap" labor?

What Price Poor Housing? The first charge which must be entered on the books against the Mexican laborer as a social liability, is his inferior standard of living; and this low standard is typified no more graphically than in his inadequate housing.

In a recent survey made over a wide area of the southwest, it was found that the average Mexican family studied was composed of six persons, and that the average house had 3.6 rooms. Numbers of instances were reported where two or more families lived together so that groups of ten were found living in two rooms, groups of as many as twelve in three rooms, and in one case fifteen were housed in a cottage of four rooms.

In large cities like Chicago and St. Louis, Mexicans

live in older tenements in the poorer sections. These are buildings which have long since been abandoned by people of a more prosperous state, and through neglect have sunk into bad repair. The average Mexican tenement dwelling in Chicago has four rooms, many of the sleeping-rooms being without outside windows. Provision for light and air is uniformly poor; and as the average family is not only large but inevitably keeps boarders, the crowded condition is aggravated. In St. Louis some of the old dilapidated buildings which are occupied by the Mexicans have plumbing facilities which are limited to one water spigot for the entire building.

Housing in Contract Camps. But when the responsibility for housing and sanitation rests with an ignorant labor contractor the conditions are unspeakably bad. Frequently because the employer speaks no Spanish and Juan García, no English, a "contractor" agrees to furnish the necessary Mexican labor to harvest a certain crop for a lump sum. The only qualifications which the contractor seems to need in many cases is the ability to make men work and a proficiency in the profanity of both tongues.

In the San Joaquin Valley in California there is a ten thousand acre ranch which produces both cotton and corn. When the officials from the State Housing Bureau visited this camp in the fall of 1927, the people were found living in tents which were rented them by the contractor. This same ever-present, bilingual gentleman ran a commissary where the workers could buy groceries, and have them charged against their pay. It was the contractor who kept all the books, paid all the wages, and assumed all responsibility for the camp. The little paths between the tents were found

littered with egg-shells, watermelon rinds, manure, broken dishes, all wet with dish-water and the overflow from the tanks, and then churned together by the trample of many feet. Moral conditions were beyond description. Bootleggers, gamblers, and vicious women preyed throughout the camp, carrying off the ready money which found its way into the pockets of the laborers after the debts were paid at the commissary. Babies were being born in tents where there were neither beds nor mattresses. One mother was seen covered with a cotton blanket, while only a gunny sack lay between her and the floor.

But why did self-respecting workers stay in such a camp? Simply because the contractor, instead of paying their wages, doled them money in "advances," thus keeping in their debt; and when the costs of rent and provisions were totalled at any time of settlement, marvellous things were done with figures by the one man in camp who knew how to use them skillfully.

When the State Housing inspector visited this particular ranch he found that the pump had been out of commission for two weeks, while the sole supply of drinking water was a slime-covered reservoir upon which tin cans and other débris floated, and where men bathed and women washed their clothes. The Housing Act of California has teeth; and this contractor was heavily fined.

But who is to blame? What price cotton? What price corn?

The Mexican Trek in Los Angeles. A most interesting development has taken place during the last six years in the housing situation in Los Angeles. Three-quarters of a century ago, when the city was a sleepy Mexican village, life centered around the plaza

on North Main Street. For years this part remained Mexican. Here were to be seen the typical *tamale* and refreshment stands, vending by the curb; here the stores where Spanish was spoken; here the men congregated when out of work, or to spend the cool of the evening. Then came the boom days of the early twenties. Property was sold and resold even before it was out of escrow. Rapid advances in values necessitated rapid increases in rent. When real estate was held as a speculation an old dilapidated building was frequently allowed to stand merely as a "tax-payer"; and the Mexican family renting it was permitted to stay. Later it was found necessary that ground in the center of the city should be improved with buildings which would give an adequate return upon the value of the property. The whole development, coming rapidly, placed a bomb under the Mexican colony. At first the people scattered all over the city. Then the gregarious instinct began to manifest itself and they colonized in what is called "Belvedere Park."

It may be that to the wander-weary Mexicans anything that was a permanent abiding place looked like a park; at all events the only "park" in evidence is the name. Just outside the city limits a real estate company secured possession of some rolling acres which had formerly been used as pasture land for a dairy. This was divided into fifty-foot lots, and sold out to the Mexicans on small payments. There were no sewers, no sidewalks, no playgrounds; and the only restriction as to the number of houses which could be built upon a single lot was the size of the lot. In a few short months a miraculous change took place. Mexicans bought property, lost it through the failure to make payments, and then bought again. They built

their houses out of second-hand lumber—" *jacales* " they call them—and in some cases roofed them over with tin cut from Standard oil cans. Two, four, five, and sometimes six little shacks were built on a single lot.

It seemed as if all Mexico were moving to Belvedere. A public school which was opened with a few hundred pupils, had reached an enrollment of eighteen hundred in less than five years. Everywhere there were the usual evidences of overcrowding and inadequate housing, for the families were not only large, but were augmented by the aunts and uncles and cousins coming from Mexico who, with ready hospitality were entertained until they could build for themselves. Says a report of the Los Angeles County Charities commenting upon a survey made in this district: "Two hundred and eighty-nine families out of a total of 1,572 cases investigated live in one room and these families range in number from two to eight. Five hundred and seventy-five families live in two-room shacks; six hundred and eighty-five in three rooms; four hundred and twenty-nine in four rooms, and one hundred and eighty-six in five rooms."

A steady improvement however, has taken place in Belvedere, and it has been largely the result of the Mexican's desire to better his own living conditions. The shacks which were built at first have gradually been remodelled, room by room. Paint has begun to cover the bare boards. Through the very efficient health service of the County of Los Angeles, the people have been persuaded and sometimes compelled to better sanitary conditions, and in every way the district is on the up-grade.

The Homogeneous Juan. A few years ago, a social

worker was making a survey of conditions among the Mexican migrants in the Imperial Valley in California. Among others, he visited a public official in one of the important towns. This man was self-made, and was extremely proud of the fact. In commenting upon his rise from a boilermaker to the dizzy heights he then occupied, he remarked that no Mexican would ever be able to duplicate his performance, because of lack of initiative. Then, wishing to paint the picture in slightly brighter colors, he exclaimed: "But this I must say for the Mexican, he is certainly homogeneous; there is nothing he loves so much as his home."

In this sense indeed is the Mexican "homogeneous." His shack, his tent, his box car, lose much of their hideousness because of the bright flowers which blossom about the place. And it is this love which is turning his hovel into a home whenever he is given half a chance.

But that wage scales and the casual system of labor do not give him that chance, is a sad fact; and when counting the cost of "cheap" labor, the social ills which follow in the train of bad housing cannot be overlooked. Says Dr. Bromley Oxnam, pastor of the Church of All Nations in Los Angeles:

"The housing background and its deadly toll is little known because bad housing kills slowly. It destroys health, morals, self-respect, ideals. . . . The fact that it takes more time to kill in no sense lessens its deadliness. . . . Housing conditions in the Mexican districts of Los Angeles are exceedingly serious."

The Cost in Poor Health. Indeed, labor is not "cheap" if it entails a continuous burden of ill-health and a high mortality rate. The California Council of Social Work which in 1925 made a study of the Mex-

ican, found that in the Los Angeles General Hospital, forty-three per cent. of all the cases were Mexicans. The City Maternity Service of the Health Department of the same city reports that sixty-two and one-third per cent. of all its cases are Mexicans, upon whom it spends seventy-three per cent. of its budget, while the Bureau of Municipal Nursing and the Division of Child Welfare, both announced that forty per cent. of their cases belong to this group. In Orange County, California, the Mexican population, which totals ten per cent., provides one-third of the cases in the General Hospital; in San Diego, where only about five per cent. of the people are Mexicans, they register one-half of the clinic patients.

But it is among the infants under one year of age that inadequate housing takes its most deadly toll. Where there is little air and less light; where there is no opportunity for the mother, overburdened with the care of a large family, to take the baby out into the sun; where deadly fumes stifle and dampness chills, there is no chance to build up that resistance which will enable the little one to conquer the diseases which so easily prey upon it. In Los Angeles County outside Los Angeles the mortality rate for 1926 for the entire population was 67.8; for the Mexican 124.6. This seems serious, but it is encouraging to note that the rate for Mexicans has been falling steadily since 1918, when it reached the high mark of 348.06. This is due in no small measure to the very efficient work of prevention and education carried on by the Health Department of Los Angeles County. A contributing factor also is the improvement in housing conditions above noted.

Cities Built Compactly. Slowly but surely we

are coming to realize that the health standards of any community are not those to be found among the better classes, but are determined by the lowest standards which are allowed to maintain. In 1924, the pneumonic plague, a phase of the bubonic, broke out in the city of Los Angeles. Accounts of the public disaster were published, it is true, in the columns on the back pages of the newspapers—columns which are reserved for the stories of the earthquakes. Investigation revealed that the two foci of infection were both in Mexican districts. Immediately the State Board of Health came to the rescue and it would have been hard to find a more splendid example of coöperation than that worked out among the health officials of the state, county and city. Guards were placed around the infected districts and the strictest quarantine was maintained until the disease was stamped out. But we know that the plague is still endemic among the rats and the ground squirrels, and a systematic campaign is on to rid the state as far as possible of these rodents. Incidentally, infected rats cannot read the quarantine regulations, and move with perfect freedom from one quarter of the city to another.

As yet no large city with a Mexican population has suffered an outbreak of typhus fever; but this disease is prevalent in certain sections of Mexico, and with such a large number of Mexicans entering illegally, thus escaping examination at the border, the danger is always present. In this connection it is interesting to note the fact that in many great cities the street-car lines run from well-to-do districts, down into the center of the city, and then on out into the poorer sections. The car fills with city-bound people in one area, empties its load in the business district, and fills

again with those going home. The louse which carries the typhus germ might thus easily change his dwelling place from rags to silk, using the street-car as a temporary parking place. A certain writer of holy writ once exclaimed in the exaltation of his spirit that Jerusalem was a city which was builded compactly together. Modern cities have no walls, but the compact nature with which their social structure is knit is as worthy of note.

Who Pays for the Crime? No less stout are the bonds which unite society in things moral; and if it can be shown that "cheap" labor increases crime and delinquency; if the poor housing which is incident thereto increases prostitution and lowers the moral standard of growing children by removing the opportunity for privacy, then the price paid for that labor is altogether too dear.

Up to the present time no adequate study has been made of the subject of delinquency and crime among Mexican laborers, either in migratory or in settled groups. Generalizations are always easy; and because he is a foreigner, Juan García is often made to bear the blame for much crime of which he is not guilty. The officials of one California county informed an investigator that the Mexicans, who comprised one-third of the population, were responsible for eighty per cent. of the crime. A check of the jails, however, on two separate dates, revealed the fact that about one out of three inmates was a Mexican. If an American misses something about the place and Juan García happens to live near, the charge is sure to be lodged against "that Mexican."

But as it is universally true that poor housing tends to increase crime, so we may expect that there is a

liability entry to be made on this score in evaluating the cost of cheap labor. Says Dr. E. S. Bogardus, head of the Department of Sociology in the University of Southern California:

“Petty thieving, bootlegging, personal violence, and sex violations are the offenses in which the lower type (socially speaking) of Mexicans rank highest. Personality studies and studies of environmental influence need to be made; and building of constructive Mexican character is the ultimate goal. But the latter is difficult to attain and maintain when environmental conditions are alive with destructive stimuli. The need of improvement in personal character and social conditions cannot be separated.”

The Cheap Labor of Little Children. Too often also “cheap” labor means child labor. State laws usually prohibit the employment of children in gainful occupations, but the ease with which they may be used by their parents in picking cotton and prunes, and in gathering walnuts, makes such laws hard to enforce.

In 1925 the National Child Labor Committee made a detailed study of the conditions prevailing among the child laborers in the beet industry in Colorado, four hundred and thirty-four families being studied in the northeastern part of the state in Logan, Morgan, and Weld Counties. About one-half of these families were Mexican or Spanish-American from Colorado and New Mexico. The outstanding fact discovered by this committee was that of all the workers required to do the handwork on 26,161 acres of beets, forty-nine per cent. were children under sixteen years of age. There were 1,081 children involved in the study, and forty-five per cent. of these did their first work in the beets



ARCHERY CLASS AT AN ARIZONA WELFARE CAMP FOR MEXICAN BOYS

before they were ten years old. Of this number there were eighteen who were less than seven years old, and two hundred and five who had not yet passed their tenth birthday.

It has been argued that it is not a heartless company but the parents themselves who employ the children, as the handwork is let out by contract to the beet families. Furthermore, it is said that the work is in the open air, and as the children are under the supervision of their parents it is impossible for them to be abused. The survey nevertheless brought to light some striking facts about the time spent by these children in the fields. One tenant family worked children of twelve, ten, and seven years for seven days a week. During the thinning time, upon their own statement, they were in the field before four o'clock, took one hour at noon, and then worked until eight o'clock. Another family told of beginning work, during the thinning period, at five o'clock. This family carried its luncheon into the field, and worked until seven or seven-thirty. One boy seven years old, thinned beets for twenty-six days of ten hours each with one hour of rest each day. An eight-year-old girl thinned sixteen days of eleven hours each, with half an hour rest; hoed eight days of eleven hours with half an hour of rest; and topped twenty-eight days of ten hours, with half an hour of rest. Among the seven-year-olds, thirty-six thinned an average of 20.2 days of 11.3 hours. Eleven of these children had no rest period outside of meal time, and twenty-five rested an average of thirty-six minutes.

The sugar companies are making efforts to mitigate these conditions, and many of the contracts provide that parents shall not work children under ten years

of age. But the root of the evil seems to be in the price paid for the work; and if the labor which is "cheap" costs the sweat of little children and the strength and vigor of their later years society cannot afford to pay the price.

The Price of Soft Living. But the greatest cost paid for Mexican labor is our own alienation from the soil and from the common, yes, even the menial tasks of life. Prof. Samuel J. Holms of the University of California has said that any race which will not do its own menial labor is doomed. Students have found the cause of America's greatness in her marvellous natural resources, in her inventive genius, in her fortuitous capitalization of the age of machinery, in her ideal constitution and system of government. But back of all these lies the character, the moral fiber of her men and her women. The Pilgrims came, not to a soft climate where food could be had for the asking, but where Nature demanded her meed of toil, of suffering, and of sacrifice. Ohio, Western Pennsylvania, West Virginia, and Kentucky were pioneered by the same hardy race of adventurers whose hands curved readily about the ax and the plough, and who toiled to carve their homes out of the wilderness.

The story was repeated in the winning of the Great American desert, and the Pacific slope. Always, as softness has come upon us, we have brought in the peoples of the less fortunate nations, to do our common work; but always we have been saved by those principles of democracy which have permitted us to see in these newcomers something more than slaves. The Swedes, the Irish, the Italians, and the German peasants have done their share of the menial tasks, and then little by little have learned to take their part in

the blessings of our commonwealth. But if the quota bars are up for all the rest of the world, and down for the Mexican; if we are to maintain one great source from which to supply our cheap labor; if we are to forget the cultural contribution which these people can make to our life, becoming blind to their art and deaf to their music; if, in short, we forge for them the shackles of economic slavery, even as the Spaniards held them by the bonds of debt, then shall we indeed sacrifice the fountains from which flow the streams of national stamina and social strength. "History reveals," says José Vasconcelos, "that any race dwelling with an inferior people which it makes no effort to elevate, will inevitably sink to the standards it condones."

No people can afford to sacrifice its contact with the soil; to buy common labor with moral values.

If we pay such a price the day may come again when some Mexican will stand at the door of his little shack by the side of the field, waiting for the day of doom.

But this time it will not be his doom alone, but ours also.

XI

WHAT ABOUT THE QUOTA?

TO most Americans the boundary line which separates their country from Mexico is a very definite thing. Their mental values are thoroughly impressionistic; to the north, prosperity and wealth, to the south, poverty and want. On one side of the line they see functioning the orderly processes of government; on the other, bullets buzz like bees and every other peon is a bandit, armed to the teeth and thirsting for blood.

An American woman of this type had approached Tia Juana with a great deal of trepidation. It was her first visit and in spite of the assurances of her friends, she could not still her beating heart. "What if a revolution should begin while she was in Mexico?" "What if some one should shoot a gun in her direction?"

The line was reached and the easy formalities required by border officials observed. The car, however, had barely left the little building which stands on the Mexican side of the line when one of the tires exploded.

"O George! they've started it!" exclaimed the woman, falling over in a faint.

So boisterous have been the enemies of international goodwill, and so persistent the efforts of the yellow press in both countries, that the faults of each people have been played up to the other. The defamation of national character has made the boundary very real.

Says an educated Mexican: "When you think of Mexico you think of ignorance and dirt; when we think of the United States we think of bootleg and divorce."

A Mexican mother who had permitted her boy to seek work in El Paso protested vigorously when he wrote saying that he had decided to enter a college in Iowa. She had heard so much about lynchings in the South, and machine-gun tactics of bootleggers and hijackers in Chicago that she "did not want him to venture so far inland."

The Lost Line. To the average Juan García, however, the boundary is highly imaginary. For about twelve hundred miles it follows the meanderings of a river, depleted through irrigation in the summer to a muddy trickle. Sometimes he sees stout barbed-wire fences, but for much of the way the same weary stretches of cactus, sage brush and mesquite greet his vision both north and south. Furthermore, there is no psychological hazard which Juan García is compelled to leap. The land to which he goes was formerly part of his country. When he crosses there is no change even in the social environment, for he enters a Mexican colony where he speaks the language and meets the people he has known since he was a child.

Shall the Quota be Applied? Because of the large immigration of Mexicans, and apprehensive of the mounting cost of "cheap" labor, social workers have for years been advocating that Mexico be placed under the quota ban. At a meeting of the "Friends of the Mexicans" held at Pomona College in November of 1927, it was proposed to take a poll on this question. A little preliminary discussion, however, revealed the fact that a poll would be unnecessary; all the representatives of the industries and of the Chambers of Com-

merce were opposed to any restriction upon Mexican immigration; all the teachers, ministers and social workers unitedly favored it.

Reasons for Free Immigration. For the past two sessions of Congress Mr. Box of Texas has introduced a bill providing for the application of the quota law to immigrants of the countries from the western hemisphere. Whenever such a proposal is made most Chambers of Commerce and every great industry in the Southwest which employs Mexican labor join the lobby to defeat the bill. It is contended that the quota law would limit Mexican immigration to 1,557 annually, while California industries alone absorb 20,000 new casual laborers each year. "Take away our Mexican labor," clamor the agents of the beet interests, "and you destroy the sugar industry." "Without the Mexicans in unlimited numbers," say the Chambers of Commerce from California's Imperial Valley, "our section will go back to the desert." The Southwest is in its infancy, runs the argument, and it can no more pass through the initial period of development without Mexicans than could Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New York and New England fifty years ago without a flood of cheap labor from Europe. It is manifestly unfair for the East to deny to the Southwest the same means which made secure its own industrial position in manufacturing, in mining and in steel.

Nor are the apostles of the industrial gospel blind to the needs of the future. They quote impressively the vast areas of desert land which will be brought under cultivation when Arizona and California shall have settled their squabble about the Colorado. They talk about cheap power which the harnessing of this

mighty stream will bring, with the consequent stimulation of industry. The future will demand not less but infinitely more cheap labor.

Needs of the Railroads. In spite of the vivid picture which one has of Mexican backs bent over fields of beets and brown faced children threading their way through rows of cotton, the railroads of the country are still the largest employers of Mexican labor. Roy W. Kelly, industrial engineer employed by the Southern Pacific System, stated in an address before the Commonwealth Club of California in October, 1927, that Mexican workers and their families comprise a shifting railroad population in all the states west of the Mississippi of not less than a quarter million.¹ In the early days the western railroads built and maintained their lines with coolie labor. Deprived of this by the Exclusion Acts, the transportation business, so vital to the interests of the whole country, will suffer a serious blow if unlimited Mexican labor is no longer available.

The Sunshine Crops. The states of the Middle West and East also, accustomed to their succession of winter and summer are not allowed to forget the peculiarities of a semi-tropical clime. They are reminded once again, but this time with a new emphasis, that "it is always summer in California" and that "Texas is where sunshine spends the winter." Every month in the year some crop is being harvested in the Southwest. Minnesota, we are told, with an inadequate labor supply, is content with an average of ninety bushels of potatoes to the acre, while the delta of the San Joaquin River produces an average of 500, with a fre-

¹ *Journal of the Commonwealth Club of California*, Vol. III, p. 599.

quent maximum of 1,000. This stimulation is possible because the grower at a critical time is able to hurl an army of men against the weeds. The beet interests explain tellingly that if the young plants are not thinned within a certain brief period the yield per acre is seriously reduced. Seasonable crops can be cared for, and perishable products can be brought to market, only through an abundance of cheap Mexican labor.

"Bootleg" Immigration. Into the ears of a people already too sensitive to the word "bootleg" the phrase is dinned with a new meaning. The opponents of the quota contend that our three thousand miles of boundary are marked for the most part by a shallow river or a surveyor's line; with the quota applied to Mexicans we must either spend millions policing the border, or wholesale bootlegging of laborers will nullify the law.

Reasons for the Quota. Even in the Southwest where Juan's muscle is considered indispensable, there are numerous voices raised in favor of a restrictive quota. Industry, it is charged, wants the Mexicans numerous and hungry—numerous so that the wage scale may be kept at a minimum, and hungry so that Juan García, when he comes looking for a job, will not bicker about the conditions under which he is to work. The standard of living which prevails among the humbler classes of Mexico is graphically pictured, and the explanation is made that unrestricted immigration but transplants these conditions into the soil of American life. Furthermore, the wages sufficiently exceed those prevailing in Mexico to attract a horde of laborers, but are not high enough to change the standards of housing, health, and sanitation.

A Subsidy to Industry. But the ugliest charge laid at the door of the employers of cheap labor is that they are annually receiving large subsidies out of the funds of churches, settlement houses, associated charities and community chests. It is insisted that the employers, in bringing unskilled labor from Mexico, assume a moral responsibility for them, and that when society through doles ekes out an insufficient wage during periods of unemployment, the charity fund is in reality being paid out to maintain the labor reservoir of the industries interested.

Protect Juan García. Another argument for restriction asserts that the Mexican already in this country must be protected from the economic competition of his job-hungry brother in Mexico. The quota through the law of supply and demand would automatically increase the wages of "that Mexican" giving him a chance to raise his standards of living. Many of the efforts of social workers are nullified by the wage scale, for it is idle to teach people to want higher standards of living when they are economically unable to maintain them.

Budgeting Labor. The advocates of a restrictive quota further contend that the employers of labor have not only been inefficient but criminally negligent in budgeting their labor needs. Neither the railroads nor the agricultural interests have gone about the task of buying labor with the same business acumen which they have manifested in the purchase of other elements of production. There must be worked out some plan of coöperation between the great industries which will utilize the Mexican labor already in the country and obviate the economic loss which Juan García suffers in looking for a job. It has been estimated that

Mexican casuals in California are idle thirty-four and seven-tenths per cent. of the time. If a railroad found that its freight cars were idle one-third of the time it would busy itself securing not new cars, but a new traffic manager. What industry needs, claim the advocates of the quota, is not more laborers but more efficient use of the labor which is already available. Such a reform would mean the application of modern personnel practice to the common laborer, and require a modification of the system of barter and exchange through private labor agents.

Where Does Juan Belong? There are those also whose insistence is loud that Juan García belongs in Mexico, simply because he is not an assimilable element in our national life.

Very properly during the past few years conditions have forced us to take stock on the whole subject of immigration. American atmosphere has no alchemy, nor our soil any magic which turns foreigners into good citizens. Our own history too often blinds our eyes and warps our judgments, for something closely bordering upon the marvellous did indeed happen in this matter of assimilation during the early days of the republic. Fifty and a hundred years ago Uncle Sam accomplished some remarkable digestive feats. Gastronomically he was a marvel. He was not particularly "choosy." Dark meat from the borders of the Mediterranean, or light meat from the Baltic, equally suited him, for promptly he was able to assimilate both, turning them into bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh. It may be that Uncle Sam is always pictured with that quaint little goatee, because some artist with an individual sense of humor felt that his digestive apparatus was similar to that of a goat!

But this *chili con carne*! Always it seems to give Uncle Samuel the heart-burn; and the older he gets, the less he seems to be able to assimilate it. Indeed it is a question whether *chili* is not a condiment to be taken in small quantities rather than a regular article of diet; and upon this conviction ought to hang all the law and the prophets so far as Mexican immigration is concerned.

Few Mexicans Become Americans. A European immigrant enters with the ambition to become an American citizen; it is a serious question whether among the hundreds of thousands of Mexicans who have come to this country, a single one ever crossed the Rio Grande with such a desire. Conditions in the new land have indeed aroused the thought in the breasts of some, for Los Angeles, with its more than one hundred thousand Mexicans, naturalizes an average of about one each month; El Paso does better, with twenty-five a year, out of a population of fifty thousand. But the best that can be said is that American citizenship is an acquired taste, and a taste that is acquired with extreme difficulty. A Mexican Consul addressing a crowd in a public park exclaimed, "When I say 'Mexican' I do not mean that nameless hybrid creature who proves false to the mother who bore him by taking out American citizenship . . ." and the chorus of "*viva Mexico*" drowned the speaker's voice. These strangers had not really crossed the boundary line; they have pushed it ahead of them. There are Mexicans born in this country who have grown to manhood without learning to speak the English language; there are Mexicans born here whose parents before them were born in this country, who have never set foot on Mexican soil, and who still

consider themselves Mexicans. And there are young men of this description who fought in France, and still would not think of renouncing their Mexican citizenship.

People or Things? It is because of this lack of homogeneity that many in the Southwest favor the movement to apply the quota to Mexico. They base their objection upon the conviction that to admit any large element which cannot be assimilated is a peril to our form of government; and succinctly state their case by suggesting to Uncle Sam that he recover from his present case of *chili* indigestion before he eats any more. They claim that it is expensive business to solve an economic problem by creating a social one, and unite with Prof. Samuel J. Holmes of the University of California when he says: "Our immigration policy has been run in order to improve things and not to improve persons . . . there is nothing quite so blinding in regard to these matters as the disc of the almighty dollar held too closely in front of the eyes."¹

Helping Mexico. And lastly, those who favor applying the quota to Mexico claim that to do so would be a friendly act to our sister republic. They note the energetic efforts of the Calles administration to persuade Mexican labor to remain at home and to repatriate those who have already emigrated. They call attention to the undeveloped resources of Mexico, to her comparatively sparse population and point out that to drain her labor supply is akin to the foreign exploitation of her natural wealth which has been going on for centuries.

Who is Right? The Harris-Box bill during the ses-

¹ *Journal of Commonwealth Club*, Vol. III, p. 631.

sion of 1928 was sent to the Senate "morgue" and we are assured therefore of no early Congressional action. But postponement is no solution. Shall we protect the growing industries of the Southwest by conserving the labor supply? Or, as the protagonists of the quota claim, would that be taking the scant profit which any man wins when he gains the world but loses his own soul?

It is indeed true that to cut down Mexican immigration at one fell swoop from 66,000 to 1,557 would deal a body blow to industry and transportation. It would be a blow felt all over the nation. We would feel it in our melons, our cotton, our grapes, our prunes, our tomatoes, our oranges; not only in the production of these commodities but also in their transportation to market. There is not a single basilar industry in the state of California except oil, lumber, and shipping, which do not rest upon Mexican labor. Suddenly to close the door to this labor supply would be disastrous; but some plan must certainly be worked out whereby industry can be conserved without incurring the social perils which unlimited immigration involves.

The Way Out. The first thing that is needed is adequate and scientific data upon the subject. In securing their labor, industries are still in the competitive, not the coöperative period. But nobody knows how much this competition is costing society, and nobody knows how much it is costing Juan García. It is to be hoped that before any legislation is passed Congress will appoint a Commission adequately financed and with sufficient powers and competent ability to make a full study of the migratory labor problem as it concerns the Mexicans. This Commission

ought to work out a plan for the budgeting of the labor needs of the industries involved, eliminating as far as possible the migratory feature and determining the real annual needs.

Having this information, a "gentlemen's agreement" might be worked out with Mexico, following the suggestion of the American Federation of Labor. This would place the responsibility upon the neighbor country, and would eliminate the difficulty which the fixing of an arbitrary quota for Mexico would entail. After the Commission had finished its work, it would be possible also to suggest to the Mexican government the number of new immigrants which each year would be able to find employment with adequate remuneration. At the same time the intelligence and health tests ought to be more strictly enforced.

Such a plan, however, does not touch the question of "bootleg" immigration. Perhaps the prohibition enforcement officers might be persuaded to lump this with their other bootleg problems!

XII

THE REAL BOUNDARY LINE

THERE is another boundary which is infinitely more productive of peril than the one marked by fences and stones; it is the boundary of suspicion, ill-will and hate. It is a boundary which encircles the American colony in Mexico City, and the Mexican colony in Los Angeles. It is a boundary marked often by the railroad tracks which separate the élite section of a town from "those Mexicans." Sometimes it is the dry wash of a river; sometimes just a neighborhood fence, bristling with mutual misunderstanding. And it is this spiritual barrier which has created most of our governmental difficulties during the past century, and which is responsible in large part for the fact that the Mexicans are not assimilable in our national life. Who began it? Why do Mexicans mistrust Americans, and Americans dislike Mexicans? Why greaser? Why gringo?

The Peril of Propinquity. Mexico and the United States suffer from being too near each other; and as if the mere fact of proximity were not enough, fate has decreed that each country should have its backyard against the other. Chihuahua and Sonora and Texas and New Mexico should not take umbrage at suggested visions of tin cans and garbage heaps; but Mexico, with her civilization in the south, and America with her face toward the east, must not forget the border raiders, who for years swept back and forth across the line until Mexicans became "greasers"

and Americans became "gringos." It was hard in the early days for both to enforce those conditions of law and order which make for mutual goodwill.

Nor has this back-yard propinquity helped Americans to understand the Mexicans. Tourists in southern California long to see a "bit of old Mexico" and they step over into Tia Juana. Travellers by the Southern Pacific like to stop off a day in El Paso, so that they may go to Juárez. But Tia Juana and Juárez are about as representative of Mexico as are the red-light districts of Chicago and St. Louis, of American life. Less so, indeed; for the conditions which American tourists find "typical" in border cities, are created by American capital to pamper to American lust. And all the while thoughtless Mexicans jeer and snicker at equally thoughtless American women, who go places and do things "just once for the thrill" which a cultured Mexican woman would never do. Thinking people of both countries regret that border conditions increase misunderstanding.

When Obregón crossed to El Paso, between the time of his first election, and his inauguration, he was visited by a committee of citizens who requested that upon his assuming the presidency, the immoral places in Juárez be "cleaned up." Obregón listened courteously to the appeal, replying that he was sure they would find his influence upon the side of law and morality. "But," said he, "would it not be well for us all to consider how much 'immoral conditions' are due to immoral places, and how much to immoral men?" Later during the presidency when the lid was clamped upon a notorious place in Tia Juana, a delegation from San Diego protested that it was "the

only pleasure resort which was available." The president replied sympathetically, but suggested that they build such resorts "north of the line!" If it were not for American capital and American vice, Tia Juana would be as dead as the "Deserted Village"; and Juárez and Mexicali, freed of their incubus of booze and lust would be able more faithfully to typify Mexican life as centers of the rich areas which they serve.

Unworthy Ambassadors. Because of the nearness of the two countries, the ambassadors which have gone from one to the other have done much to increase the misunderstanding; for the real ambassadors are not those who go with powers plenipotentiary, but those who go as citizens. Mexico too often has known only the American exploiter; to America have come the poorest representatives of the Mexican race.

Let not every American who has been in Mexico, nor every Mexican in the United States take offense at these words. The business of Americans in Mexico has been that of exploiting the natural resources of the country, and of bringing or sending the profits home. Other nations have seen such profits reinvested; Mexico for a century has been bleeding at every pore, until she has been called the "mother of foreigners, and the stepmother of Mexicans." On the other hand, the only opportunities offered her nationals in this country have been those that bid for bone and brawn. People who have made their way in Mexico, who have initiative, who have acquired property, who are factors in the community life, have not been free nor willing to leave. Our industries have recruited from the ranks of the restless, the foot-loose, the failures. Of course there have come thousands of

students, and thousands more of pioneer stuff; but the rank and file have illy represented their land.

Indeed there are perils in propinquity, and one can understand a Mexican speaker in the Chamber of Deputies saying in 1873:

“Border nations are natural enemies. . . . Who despoiled France of a section of her territory? The border nation, Germany. Who is invading Turkey at the present time? The bordering nation, Russia. . . . What war is there between Spain and Switzerland, between Italy and Russia? None. It is a natural law of history that border nations are enemies.”¹

The Meddlers. Furthermore, it seems to have been the sad fate of the United States and Mexico, that there have always existed interests which could profit by creating ill-will between them. Spain, smarting from the loss of her colony, and France and England, jealous lest the young American republic should extend itself, early began the business of peddling trouble. England countered to the Monroe Doctrine by sending commissioners to Mexico who protested that Britain coveted no territory, and would resist any power seeking to weaken the cause of Mexican liberty. When Poinsett therefore went to Mexico as first American representative, he found that prejudice against his country had already been created. The discovery of oil, and the international jockeying for position in the effort to control it have presented broad avenues of opportunity to the apostles of ill-will.

In the same way, the extension of American in-

¹ Rippey: *The United States and Mexico*, p. 321.

terests has created a group passionately committed to the cause of intervention. Whenever American capital feels the pinch of what it considers unjust laws, a wave of sympathy for the "poor peon who knows nothing but revolution" sweeps over the country, and there is loud talk of "going in and cleaning up Mexico." Quite typical was the "exposure" by the Hearst papers in the fall of 1927 of "official documents" showing that Mexico was buying arms for Nicaragua; that she was involved with Soviet Russia; and that large sums of money were being spent in this country for the purposes of propaganda. The Mexican embassy promptly denied the authenticity of the papers, a denial which was later supported by the Senate investigation.

That Mr. Hearst owns seven and one-half million acres of land in Chihuahua, much of which was bought at two and one-half cents an acre, is a fact highly illuminating.

Religious Liberty. And in the name of religious liberty there are those also who busy themselves creating miasmas of misunderstanding. Mexico is called "red" and her crimson character is proclaimed by printed propaganda, even though she has indignantly repudiated the advances of the Soviet government. She is called socialistic, because she is striving to return to her people what is rightfully theirs; and in the sweet name of religious liberty she is condemned by an organization which in all the history of the country has consistently championed the cause of those opposed to that principle. It has been the misfortune of the two countries that always there have been those who could profit by their ill-will.

The Doctrine of "Manifest Destiny." Scarcely had

the smoke floated away from the muzzles of Iturbide's guns in 1821, when the politicians of the United States Government began to talk of extending the ample folds of the stars and stripes over the territory which had won its independence from Spain. Did this herald the dawn of a settled imperialistic policy, or rather was it the adolescent exuberance of a youthful nation? It is probable that the national spirit as we understand it to-day had not yet been born. The states considered themselves a federation. They were drunk with liberty, obsessed with the advantages of their system of government, and zealous that others should share those blessings. To add therefore to their territory was not to *take* something from others; it was to *give* to others that which they enjoyed.

So loud became the talk of annexing Mexico, both in Congress and in the press, that it amounted to what Prof. Rippey in *The United States and Mexico* calls the "doctrine of manifest destiny." When statesmen were declaring that it was the manifest destiny that the United States should extend her domain from the Arctic to the straits of Darien, it was but natural that daring spirits who could fight better than they could talk, should engage in filibustering expeditions. While promptly disclaimed by the United States, these invasions of Mexican soil have done nothing to create better feeling between the two countries.

Settling the Dust. When John Forsyth of Alabama was sent by President Pierce as ambassador to Mexico, he was instructed to allay the suspicion which she seemed to have that we were trying to acquire her territory. He was given but short time, however, to accomplish this laudable purpose, because he had not been in Mexico more than a year before Buchanan

became president. He immediately instructed Forsyth to offer twelve or fifteen million dollars for Lower California and a large portion of Sonora and Chihuahua. He was not able to arrange for the purchase, but he did negotiate a treaty providing for a loan to Mexico, about which he wrote with engaging frankness:

"I regarded a loan to Mexico as a species of floating mortgage upon the territory of a poor neighbor . . . which in the end . . . could only be repaid by a peaceable foreclosure with her consent. In short, finding it impossible to acquire territory immediately, I did the next best thing, which was to pave the way for the acquisition hereafter."¹

The American nation was born during the Civil War, and in the hot fires of that struggle the fabric of the doctrine of "manifest destiny" was consumed. No longer do our statesmen think of the acquisition of territory as a duty to confer the blessings of our form of government upon oppressed peoples; but the Mexican mind is ruled by the history thus briefly reviewed. And while these facts do not appear in our own school histories, they are certainly not overlooked in the record which is being studied by the Mexican children. Says Rudolfo Brito, professor in the law school of the National University: "The history which I studied as a boy in the primary school would make any child hate the United States of the North."

But with the death of the doctrine of "manifest destiny" there has come a new type of imperialism which is feared quite as much by the Mexicans. It is the imperialism which sends out a vanguard of dol-

¹ Rippey: *The United States and Mexico*, p. 176.

lars, later insisting upon diplomatic pressure and the landing of marines to protect those investments.

The Superiority Complex. And it is the aggressive superiority complex of the thoughtless American which constantly rubs salt in old wounds. To begin with, most Americans are helplessly provincial and hopelessly ignorant about our southern neighbor. The movies have pictured Juan García as a bad man with a wide sombrero and a nervous trigger-finger. The newspapers see no news in Mexico which does not have to do with a revolution, and no news in a revolution which does not involve firing squads. Epochal changes which are shattering a social and economic system pass unnoticed, but the patter of bullets is duly chronicled. Little wonder, therefore, that violence, ignorance, filth, are the colors which the American uses to picture the Mexicans, and then when he ventures among them, he demeans himself with haughty superiority. As a tourist, he is prone to stalk about among the kneeling worshippers in churches, making remarks about their "superstitions." One of this breed visited a cathedral, where the attendant with great reverence showed him a candle burning before the altar.

"That candle," said the guide, "has not been out for fifty years."

"No?" said the tourist with a loud guffaw, "Puff! It's out now!"

An American of the same type entered the best hotel in Mexico City, and offering the cashier American gold, exclaimed:

"Here! Give me some monkey money! Can't you understand? Give me some Mex!"¹

¹ Report of Commission on International and Interracial Factors, El Paso Congress. Dec., 1927, p. 36.



THE QUIET STREAM OF MEXICO'S COUNTRY LIFE

The Inferiority Complex. On the reverse side of the coin is the inferiority complex of the Mexican. That this exists Juan García himself would be the first to deny; that it is an essential part of his make-up his best friends admit. The Spaniards doubted at times if he had a soul and in all their dealings with him made him feel his inferiority. Anchored by the land system to the customs and the civilization of the sixteenth century he has felt the progress of the rest of the world sweep around him like an eddy tide. Always just beyond his reach he has seen wealth and power greater than his own. Living in the midst of incomparable natural resources, he has watched the wealth made possible through the exploitation of those resources pass into the hands of foreigners. This explains the alertness with which he springs to the defense of his honor, the sensitiveness of his nature, and the dignity with which the sovereign rights of the Mexican nation are always maintained. Poor as she is, Mexico suffers not so much from material loss as from spiritual wounds; and in every controversy we find her asserting the rights of a sovereign power. The assertion of Kellogg that she "was on trial before the world" wounded her at the place where she is most sensitive. It is because of this inferiority complex that she is offended by the Monroe Doctrine. For her it implies the need of protection and is the badge of inferiority.

What Difference Does it Make? For so long have we accepted the spiritual boundary between Mexico and the United States that the question might well be asked, what difference does it make?

Because of their common blood, for the most part their common language, and their common racial

heritage, the Latin nations of the western world are coming to think together and to act together; and in this developing community interest are more and more looking to Mexico for leadership. As our nearest neighbor, the South American republics take it for granted that she must know us best. Our relationships with Mexico, therefore, will increasingly determine our position in the Western Hemisphere.

But the problem is a domestic one also. Ours is a nation of foreigners; a nation dedicated to the principles of liberty and equality; a nation which has proceeded upon the theory that it is possible to welcome strangers and to turn them into American citizens. A policy which keeps the foreigner foreign is the denial of our democracy and a reversal of the trend of our national life.

Blotting Out the Boundary. With the constant stream of Mexican laborers passing north and south in the search for employment, nothing is so effective in breaking down the barriers between the races as the spirit of fair play on the part of American industry. The future peace of America as far as her southern neighbor is concerned is in the hands of the employers of labor. If Juan García picks lettuce under employment by a "contractor" and then when the short day's work is finished at noon, is unable to find the man who ought to pay him his wage, a new crop of hatred is sown between the races. If he is compelled to work under impossible living conditions he goes home to swell the tide of ill-will toward this country.

The Tagus Ranch. But just as there are employers who think of "that Mexican" only as one of the raw materials of production, so there are those who are

thoughtful of his welfare. Near Tulare, California, is a ranch called "Tagus," where seven thousand acres of fertile soil furnish employment for permanent as well as casual laborers. There is no labor contractor; but serving as "labor manager" is a bilingual young American intelligent enough to realize that contentment and well-being are factors in production. The permanent camp, located in a grove, is lighted by electricity, and is composed of neat white cottages, arranged in streets, and covered with vines and flowers.

Pure water is conveniently piped to each house, while hot and cold showers encourage personal cleanliness. Sewers have been installed, and there are covered garbage cans regularly emptied by attendants whose sole responsibility is to care for the grounds and buildings. The temporary camp is as well equipped, except that the dwellings are clean tents. A system of credits permits a family to move from a tent to a cottage. There is no labor trouble.

The Juan García who returns to Mexico from such a camp will tell about a different America from the one who lived in the neighboring contract camp already described.

Summer Sessions at the National University. Because we are so much interested in business it may not be surprising that the Mexican government should have taken the first steps in the effort to better relations. For seven consecutive summers the National University in Mexico City has offered courses to American teachers and social workers, and as many as four hundred students in a single summer have availed themselves of the opportunities provided. The visitors are given courses in Spanish; in the story of Mexico's

past, the problems of her present, and in the ideals which she holds for the future. With characteristic hospitality homes are thrown open, while folk-songs and native dances are provided for the entertainment of the students. Excursions are arranged to points of interest, so that the American is given a glimpse of a Mexico different from the one he has read about in the papers; a Mexican different from the man he has seen in the movies.

Two of these American girls had gone out on a Saturday to a little Indian town which is famous for its *serapes*. Interested in the art of the weavers, they did not notice the flight of time until the last train for the city had left. The town was nothing but a group of adobe huts about a little plaza. Perplexed and frightened as to how they were to spend the night, they were approached by a barefoot man, dressed in the conventional white cotton suit of the country. Touching his broad sombrero, he offered them the hospitality of his home. The evening meal of beans and *tortillas* was enriched by a chicken killed in their honor. Then their hostess spread two rough mats called *petates* upon the floor, and as the family withdrew, the man said:

"May you rest well! See! I have left the dog at the front door, that you may have no fear."

The visitors passed a safe if uncomfortable night; and when they returned to their homes in the United States they felt that they knew the Mexicans, as well as knowing something about them.

It is the avowed purpose of the Mexican consul in Los Angeles to bring a student from each one of the twenty-eight states to study in some American university during the summer, while Pomona College in

California has a regular arrangement with the National University which provides for exchange students at the summer sessions of the two institutions. A similar plan might be worked out in Rotary and other service clubs whereby exchange speakers could interpret the institutions, the life, the customs and the ideals of each nation to the other.

Schools, Churches, Settlements. With no desire save that of educating the children of all who come to America, the schools are rendering a large service in dispelling the ill-will of a century, while free clinics and settlements give the Mexican a new idea about Americans. As Juan García goes home for a visit he tells with pride about the fine education his children have enjoyed, and his heart is warmed by the friendship which has been shown him in times of sickness and need. He is an ambassador in overalls from America to Mexico.

Mr. Jones, Meet Mr. García! Having discovered that much of the misunderstanding which has complicated our relations with our neighbor country during the past hundred years has been due to propinquity, it seems almost a contradiction to infer that Mr. Jones and Mr. García must come to know each other better. There is, however, no contradiction in fact. We Americans have touched the Mexicans only at the industrial point of contact; the point where misunderstandings, enmities and wars have always been born. Except for the occasional missionary or tourist, the American who goes to Mexico desires to make money. His dealings with Mr. García are always business dealings. If he has met him socially at all, he has dined with him and drunk with him only that he might the better do business with him. When Mr.

García comes to America, he is driven also by an economic force; and the industries which lure him are interested in him only as one of the raw materials of production. Mexico to Mr. Jones is the land of oil, of gold and silver, of hard woods, and of cheap labor; beyond this, his interest rarely leads him. Mr. García is a man who has a strong back, sinewy arms and sturdy legs; of his mental and spiritual qualities Mr. Jones is contentedly ignorant. He knows nothing about his marvellous past, stretching back before the dawn of history. He is deaf to his music, blind to his art. Mr. Jones has never read the Papal bull explaining that the Mexican Indian has a soul.

The Personal Equation. The extension of business interests or even the multiplication of philanthropic organizations can never blot out the boundary line of ill-will. We may build settlements and schools and churches on every corner of every district where Mexicans live, and unless individual Americans show the spirit of fair play, such work will be in vain.

An American who had meditated much upon this subject greeted eight Mexicans working upon the street-car tracks with the cheering salutation, "Good-morning, gentlemen!" One more learned than the rest explained the meaning of the word "gentlemen"; and when the American returned from his walk, the eight Mexicans stood at attention upon their shovels, and with bared heads waited until he had passed.

North and south of the line, the problem is fast becoming one of people, not politics; a question not as to what shall be the attitude of America toward Mexico, but what shall be the attitude of Americans toward Mexicans, and of Mexicans toward

Americans. The flight of Lindbergh and the visit of Will Rogers have done more to remove the boundary of misunderstanding than all the notes of our state department.

Hands Off! Driven by the surge of the new nationalism American corporations in Mexico are facing the necessity of placing increasing responsibility in the hands of Mexicans. The Southern Pacific, for instance, is required by the government to develop a policy looking toward the gradual assumption by Mexicans of the affairs of management.

Now, there is nothing harder for an American than to sit quietly by and see a foreigner "muddle" through a task until he has acquired efficiency. Perhaps as difficult is it for him to witness with tolerance work done by a method different from the one to which he is accustomed. Only through this assumption of responsibility, however, will the latent resources in the personality of the Mexican people be developed.

The Case of the Church. And before it emerges with dignity from the present struggle, the Roman Catholic Church must learn the same lesson. It is highly probable that both government and hierarchy regret the impasse into which the events of the past few years have forced them; but the new nationalism has developed such driving power that never again can the Church hope to establish a "state within a state." If the Pope knew his Mexico, he would no longer be guided by the advice of those willing to sacrifice the spiritual well-being of the people for personal power, and would send the clericals back to their posts.

The Opportunity of Protestantism. Quite as outspoken is the opposition to the foreign features of Protestantism, for among the native leaders of all

denominations there is a demand that the work be placed in their hands. Americans, whose power in missionary councils is the power of the purse through the control of the budget, have in most cases urged the impossibility of placing American money in Mexican hands for administration. To do so might mean years of inefficiency and extravagance; but it is highly probable that this policy would in the end be productive of the greatest good. Perhaps in the present crisis Protestantism stands before her great door of opportunity without realizing it.

The Case of the Government. Nor will a continuance of our national policy of bluffing, of threatening, of asserted superiority, of "watchful waiting" ever remove the boundary caused by a century of misunderstanding. Mexico's great task is that of giving her people liberty, and of getting them educated before they have a chance to turn that liberty into license. And this she must do without running amuck of foreign powers. Her foreign policy keeps the administration awake nights quite as much as the tasks of land distribution and education, for Mexico is dependent upon foreign capital for the development of her resources. What tries her sensitive soul is to be reminded constantly that she must solve a problem which she is trying desperately to solve, and to be told also just exactly *how* she must solve it.

Respect for Mexico's national sovereignty, in the spirit of coöperation and goodwill; sympathy for her struggle to endow her people with land, and the blessings which flow from its possession; is this the way of temporary inefficiency, unrest, revolution?

Perhaps; but it is also the way of a neighbor; it is the path of peace.

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